Annual Accountability Report

for the fiscal year 2002-2003

Province of Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002–2003

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

NOVA SCOTIA

106-0 5814 /

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2003

This document is available on the Internet at
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/TPB/publications.htm>

For further information about the Government of Nova Scotia's Annual Accountability Report, please contact:

Treasury and Policy Board
Government of Nova Scotia
PO Box 1617
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3J 2Y3

Telephone: (902) 424-8910
Fax: (902) 424-7638
E-mail: tpbenquiries@gov.ns.ca

Designed and published in conventional and electronic form by Communications Nova Scotia.

PRINTED IN CANADA

ISSN: 0-88871-838-1

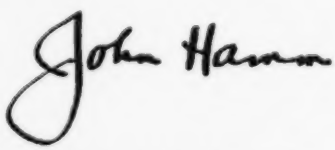
Message from Premier John Hamm

I am pleased to present the Government of Nova Scotia's Annual Accountability Report for the fiscal year 2002–2003. This is the third report of its kind, as required by the Provincial Finance Act.

I am encouraged by the progress made by the Government of Nova Scotia in 2002–2003. We brought in a balanced budget for the first time in 40 years, while making key investments and improvements in the programs and services that Nova Scotians value.

The accountability report details a wide range of activities that were under way in 2002–2003 to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians, now, and in the future. The careful planning behind these activities ensures that taxpayers' dollars have been well spent.

We are working hard every day to help build a healthier, stronger, and prouder Nova Scotia. The province has many opportunities ahead, and it is encouraging to see that Nova Scotians are working with government to capitalize on them.



The Honourable John Hamm
Premier of Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002–2003

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

Contents

Introduction 7
Health and Health Care 9
Education and Learning 27
The Economy 47
Families and Communities 67
The Environment 85
Government Services 99
Appendix: Measuring Our Performance 115

Introduction

The purpose of the *Annual Accountability Report 2002–2003* is to report the results of activities and plans outlined in the *Government Business Plan 2002–2003*, published in April 2002.

The Government of Nova Scotia planned in 2002–2003 to bring in a balanced budget for the first time in 40 years, and that goal was accomplished.

The government managed taxpayer resources carefully, controlling unnecessary short-term spending while making strategic investments that will create revenues to support programs and services for Nova Scotians in the future.

In 2001–2002, government set out six strategic goals to make Nova Scotia a better place in which to live and work. These goals continued in 2002–2003:

- to put—and keep—Nova Scotia's finances in order
- to put crucial services—health, education, social—on a sustainable foundation
- to provide responsible, accountable governance
- to create conditions that help the economy grow
- to provide Nova Scotians with opportunities to learn throughout their lives, so they can continue to succeed in a rapidly changing world
- to foster an environment that allows and encourages Nova Scotians to work, live, raise families, and stay in Nova Scotia

To continue progress against these goals, government analysed provincial strengths and weaknesses and identified potential opportunities and threats as part of the 2002–2003 business planning process. Five themes were chosen to reflect the priorities:

- fiscal stability
- growing the economy
- sustainable health-care management
- education and skills training
- good management and professional public service

The government aligns corporate goals and themes with specific priorities and initiatives under each of the government's core business areas. These are the fundamental roles, functions, and services that Nova Scotians expect their government to provide. Government has six core business areas:

- health and health care
- education and learning
- the economy
- families and communities
- the environment
- government services

The *Annual Accountability Report 2002–2003* presents the results of the government priorities for the fiscal year outlined under each core business area. These represent a sample of government's work in each core business area. More detail is available in the annual accountability reports of individual departments and offices.

The government report is available in hard copy and on-line versions, and the department/office reports are published on their websites in PDF for easy downloading. More detail on the government's financial performance is available in the Public Accounts for 2002–2003, released on November 14, 2003, by the Department of Finance.

Health and Health Care

The Government of Nova Scotia worked hard in 2002–2003 to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to high-quality health-care services, when and where they need them. At the same time, government developed strategies to support Nova Scotians in their efforts to maintain their mental and physical health and to avoid health problems as they grow older.

In November 2002, the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada identified a number of priorities to protect the future of health care in Canada:

- health human resource planning and incentives for professionals working in rural communities
- faster access to tests and treatment
- community- and team-based health services available for more hours of the day
- guaranteed funding to support stability and long-term planning
- clear standards and accountability for results

Nova Scotia, along with the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories, released the five-year First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal in February 2003, which will support increased investment in health care in areas such as primary health care, home care, and pharmaceutical coverage.

The Government of Nova Scotia developed a blueprint for health and health care in Nova Scotia to respond to these national and local priorities. *Your Health Matters*, released in March 2003, outlined how the province intends to

- help Nova Scotians keep themselves healthy
- train and keep more doctors, nurses, and other health professionals
- shorten wait lists for tests, treatment, and care
- improve care for our seniors
- expand access to health services
- ensure accountability for results

The Office of Health Promotion was created in 2002–2003 to increase the focus and attention on helping people stay healthy. Programs relate to health promotion, preventive health, wellness, and addiction services and include problem gaming services, tobacco control, and sport, recreation, and physical activity.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Increase DHA operational funding overall by 10 per cent and allocate it according to demonstrated efficiencies. Develop a funding methodology for DHAs that ensures equity and consistency. (Health)

The Department of Health increased operating budgets for district health authorities (DHAs) by 10 per cent in the 2002–2003 budget. The $22.5-million increase reflected the priorities of government and the priorities of Nova Scotians. This was in addition to $65 million already set aside to cover wage settlements negotiated for nurses and other health-care workers.

Preliminary work for the development of an acute-care funding formula was started in 2002–2003.

PRIORITY

Develop and implement a plan for the care of mentally ill adults, youth, and children, including strategies for mental health consumer involvement, reducing the stigma of mental illness and increasing public awareness. (Health)

In February 2003, the Department of Health released its strategic direction for mental health services and standards. The standards address appropriate numbers and qualifications for staff, timely access to emergency care and treatment, and follow-up with patients after hospital discharge. The standards and direction were developed by more than 200 Nova Scotians, including mental health professionals, advocacy groups, people who use mental health services, and members of their families.

The mental health standards will assist the DHAs and the IWK with a self-assessment process that will facilitate the development of mental health services planning. Meeting mental health standards across the province is expected to take 5 to 10 years.

Work began on Consumer Initiative Grants to increase consumer involvement in planning, delivering, and evaluating mental health services. The department invited proposals from community groups

in September 2002 and received 23 funding applications. The following six projects, totalling $150,000, were selected:

- Public Education on Eating Disorders—Eating Disorders Community Support, Yarmouth
- Mental Health Advocacy Skills Program, Strengthen Our Sustainability, Inverness
- Postpartum Depression Support, Parent Resource Centre, Dartmouth
- Schizophrenia Education Kit, Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia, Dartmouth
- Parent's Resource Library, Parent's Place, Yarmouth
- Advocacy And Leadership Skills Program, Depression, Manic Depression and Family Support/Self-Help Society of Nova Scotia, Digby

PRIORITY

Develop a framework for delivering mental health services for children and youth in residential treatment settings. (Health)

Under the framework of the new strategic direction for mental health, two new community-based mental health treatment teams were developed in 2002–2003. The teams were planned for the Cape Breton DHA and the IWK Health Centre to serve children and youth who require an intensive level of care. Addressing a long-standing gap in mental health services, they provide a level of service that falls between outpatient treatment and inpatient services. Telehealth technology will be used to allow community-based treatment teams to work together on patient care and treatment strategies.

Work also began on a new 12-bed residential rehabilitation treatment centre, which was scheduled to open later in 2003. It will provide professional care and security that previously could be provided only outside of Nova Scotia for most children. This centre will be available to those who require medium- to longer-term care.

PRIORITY

Develop a framework for a comprehensive continuum of long-term care supports and services for disabled adults. (Community Services)

In November 2002, the Department of Community Services started a review of the Community Supports for Adults program. This program provides support services to adults with disabilities so they can reach their full potential as participants in the community. The program renewal initiative will result in improved services for these clients.

Extensive consultations took place with client service providers, program and departmental staff, community members and staff in other departments. Recommendations will be developed on the following:

- a new model of service delivery for clients
- a new funding framework
- standardized assessments
- new policies and legislation to support the model

During 2002–2003, five field assessment positions were created to enhance the licensing process for the Community Supports for Adults Program. In addition, the National Association for Regulatory Administration provided intensive training on licensing to field assessors and management staff. This training highlighted the roles and responsibilities of licensing staff.

PRIORITY

Implement single-entry access (SEA) to home care, long-term care, and adult protection services across Nova Scotia. Develop a means of determining the optimum size, scope, contribution, and distribution of continuing care services across Nova Scotia.
(Health)

Single entry access is a process that helps Nova Scotians connect with home care, long-term care placement, or protection for vulnerable adults through a single toll-free telephone number. They are connected with professional care workers, qualified to determine what level of care best meets the needs of each individual, ensuring that those who need care most, receive care first.

In fall 2002, Nova Scotia became the first province in Canada to implement the RAI-HC (Resident Assessment Instrument—Home Care) assessment tool province-wide and the first province to augment this tool with an automated intake function and managed wait list for long-term care facilities.

Nova Scotia has also implemented an automated service plan based on an integrated software named SEAscape. Early evidence shows that this approach has slowed the rate of increase in people waiting for long-term care placement.

In addition, an analysis of long-term care, home care, and other continuing care programs was undertaken in 2002. DHAs and the continuing care sector were targeted for consultation.

PRIORITY

Implement the next phase of the Tobacco Strategy to discourage smoking, in particular among our young people. This strategy includes increased taxes on tobacco products as well as enforcement, smoking cessation, and warning programs. (Office of Health Promotion, Finance, Education, Justice, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Significant progress was made in implementing the province's comprehensive Tobacco Strategy in 2002–2003:

- The Smoke-Free Places Act came into effect, placing strong restrictions on smoking in most workplaces and public places throughout the province.
- Funding was provided to district health authorities to support the hiring of coordinators to run community-based smoking-prevention programs and of addictions staff to enhance nicotine dependency treatment services.
- A province-wide tobacco public awareness campaign was launched, including television and print advertisements.
- Enforcement of the Tobacco Access Act (restricting sales to minors) was ongoing.

Measures to track the effectiveness of these efforts include measuring the proportion of the non-smoking population regularly exposed to environmental smoke in public spaces and workplaces and the percentage of youth who smoke (for more information, please refer to the section on Measuring Our Performance).

Tobacco sales volumes have steadily decreased since the implementation of the tobacco tax increases that were begun in April 2001. Tobacco taxes were increased on April 5, 2002, and January 9, 2003, with cigarette taxes increasing by $5.00 per carton each time. Volumes are down approximately 15 per cent from 2000–2001, with the larger decreases in cigarette consumption partly offset by shifts to lower-cost tobacco sticks and fine-cut tobacco.

The fine structure in relation to tobacco offences, amended in 2001–2002, is graduated and reflects the quantity of tobacco involved and whether it is a first or subsequent offence.

The Department of Education assisted in the revision of three *Smoke Free for Life*

curriculum supplements for health education in grades primary–3, 4–6, and 7–9. The department supported boards in their implementation of tobacco use policies, tobacco education, and anti-smoking initiatives, including the *No More Butts* program.

PRIORITY

Further develop the provincial Physical Activity Strategy for Children and Youth, which will support communities and organizations in their efforts to encourage Nova Scotians to increase their activity levels. Work will continue toward the goal of 1200 kilometres for the Nova Scotian section of the Trans Canada Trail.
(Office of Health Promotion, Natural Resources, Education, Health)

The premier launched the three-year Active Kids Healthy Kids Strategy in October 2002. The strategy is coordinated by the Office of Health Promotion, in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Department of Health.

Eleven active school community pilot projects were launched, one in each regional school board and on three native reserve sites. These projects explore ways in which school officials, parents, and students can work with municipal recreation departments and district health authorities to encourage young people to be more active, for example, through in-school and after-school programs, family and community activities, and more time for physical education within the school day.

The Physical Activity Strategy for Children and Youth also supported the following:

- six regional action plans, implemented by the Office of Health Promotion's regional sport and recreation staff, with municipal recreation staff, district health boards and school boards
- a workshop for adult leaders on youth inclusion, held in conjunction with a provincial youth development agency, Heartwood, in October 2002
- the Pathways for People Active Transportation Tour and the Active and Safe Routes to School program, carried out in collaboration with the Ecology Action Centre to promote walking and bicycling
- work with Recreation Nova Scotia to promote Health Canada's new physical activity guides for children and youth

The government continued to support research into promoting physical activity among children and youth in 2002–2003:

- The results of the 2001 accelerometer research study on physical activity levels of students in grades 3, 7, and

11 were released to the public and the media in September 2002.

- A *Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* resource study was conducted in grades 5–8.
- Funding was provided to the Nova Scotia Fitness and Lifestyle Leaders Association for research on a youth fitness module taught by grade 11 and 12 students.
- Researchers from Dalhousie and St. Francis Xavier Universities started the first phase of a project to assess and enhance physical activity counselling, with sponsorship of the Alliance for Health Eating and Physical Activity, Cancer Care Nova Scotia, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

The Trans Canada Trail continues to be developed as a world-class multi-use facility with the support of several government departments, municipal governments, and community trail groups. The corridor, previously owned by the Dominion Atlantic Railway, was received from the Trans Canada Trail Foundation and is managed by the province for future development of community-based recreational trails.

In 2002–2003, more than 225 kilometres of abandoned rail corridor, running from New Minas to Yarmouth, were under construction by municipalities and community trail groups.

PRIORITY

Develop an approach to address the service gaps in addiction services for women and youth. (Health, Office of Health Promotion)

The Department of Health invested $1.8 million in 2002–2003 to enhance community-based addiction services. As part of that strategy, the DHAs hired 26 new addiction workers.

New staff work with schools, youth and women's groups, community groups, and other health-care providers to increase prevention efforts and reduce the harm caused by addictions. They also deliver more treatment programs, such as mobile clinics, group counselling sessions, and day treatment programs, that are tailored to the needs of women and youth.

PRIORITY

Develop an enhanced home visiting component to the existing Early Childhood Development project, with funding support from the federal government. (Health, Community Services, Office of Health Promotion)

Healthy Beginnings, announced in November 2002, is a provincial program designed to make the early days and years with a new baby easier. It allows public health nurses and specially trained

community members to offer ongoing home visits for up to three years to families needing more support. The home visits can provide everything from parenting and breastfeeding support to helping families access other resources in their community, such as childcare, family resource centres, or programs for children with special needs.

Under the guidance of the Provincial Healthy Beginnings Provincial Steering Committee, the following accomplishments were achieved in 2002–2003:

- development of the provincial program framework, standards, and targets
- disbursement of funds for Public Health Services in the DHAs to plan and implement programs
- development of a DHA financial reporting system to the Department of Health for ECD/Healthy Beginnings funds
- development of a provincial database to support local monitoring of Healthy Beginnings implementation
- allocation of funding for professional development and training to support public health services staff conducting universal postpartum screening and in-depth family assessment
- formation of local implementation teams (led by Public Health Services)
- recruitment of Public Health Services staff to support full implementation of this initiative

Healthy Beginnings is funded through the $2.2-billion federal Early Childhood Development Fund, which also supports quality child care, parent education and support, and early childhood systems development.

PRIORITY

Identify strategies to improve disease management across the continuum of health care and service. Develop and implement a coordinated strategy to meet the needs of patients with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. (Health, Office of Health Promotion)

Understanding that hepatitis B, hepatitis C, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and other diseases caused by blood-borne pathogens (BBPs) are preventable, the Department of Health began the Prevention of Blood Borne Pathogens Project in July 2002. The project facilitates coordination and integration of a system of prevention and social support services to address the prevention needs and contribute to the overall goal of decreased incidence and prevalence of BBPs.

Stakeholders provided support for the approach represented by the model. Working groups were established to

develop standards in each of four priority areas: prevention and wellness promotion, opiate replacement therapy (methadone), testing (including anonymous HIV testing), and needle exchange.

PRIORITY

Continue implementation of the Hospital Information System (hIS) project to satisfy the need for timely and relevant clinical and management information for evidence-based decision making. (Health)

A comprehensive hospital information system will mean that the health records of Nova Scotians will travel with them wherever they access hospital-based care in the province. The Nova Scotia Hospital Information System (NShIS) implements clinical information systems across the province to enable health care providers to access the information they need to provide quality health care.

The first installation was successfully completed in February 2003 in the Guysborough/Antigonish/Strait Health Authority. Work is now under way to expand the system to Cape Breton in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Further develop the accountability framework for DHAs, which meets the requirements of the Health Authorities Act and is focused on service quality, resource utilization management, standards development, monitoring processes, financial accountability, and outcomes. (Health)

The Department of Health continued to improve its financial accountability processes and reporting in 2002–2003, for both department programs and third-party health service providers.

The MIS reporting database on district health authority expenditure was the most complete and accurate to date. Financial and statistical data from DHAs meet national reporting standards, which allows for comparison between health authorities.

The department began the development and distribution of routine financial indicators and has begun to integrate the use of the MIS database in business planning and budget analysis.

Fiscal year 2002–2003 marks the first complete year in which the department received completed financial and service reporting from the home care and in-home support providers. This information

was used for budget management and reallocation of resources.

The department also continues to improve the integration between business and budget plans, along with a process to approve and monitor capital projects.

PRIORITY

Promote a comprehensive physician resource plan for Nova Scotia and continue with implementation of a comprehensive provincial nursing strategy. (Health)

A flexible approach to physician service planning in Nova Scotia was developed by the Nova Scotia's Physician Resource Planning Steering Committee, with representation from the Department of Health, physician and academic communities, the Medical Society of Nova Scotia, the Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine, the Nova Scotia College of Physicians and Surgeons, the district health authorities, and the IWK Health Centre.

The plan is designed to promote reasonable access to doctors in rural and urban areas and to support recruitment and retention efforts. Consultations on the approach and application will be carried out during 2003–2004, with implementation of the plan to follow.

In 2002–2003, a number of related initiatives were under way:

- The Department of Health worked with the Dalhousie Medical School on a proposal that could streamline the time it takes for internationally trained specialists to have their qualifications assessed. Work is still ongoing.
- The Government of Nova Scotia and Dalhousie University worked on a long-term plan that would see more doctors trained in Nova Scotia. Eight new undergraduate student positions were approved for the Dalhousie Medical School. Currently, Dalhousie Medical School enrols 82 undergraduates annually and trains approximately 435 residents.
- Consultation took place on a bursary or sponsorship for doctors who agree to practise in Nova Scotia. One option would enable districts to cover some education costs for medical students in return for a commitment to work within the sponsoring district. Work on this initiative will continue.

As part the Department of Health's Nursing Strategy, the following initiatives were announced:

- As many as 240 more nurses will be educated in Nova Scotia over the next four years under a new $7-million training plan. This funding was in addition to the $10 million already invested in the provincial nursing strategy over the past two years.

- Eight new nurse practitioners were placed in the communities of Annapolis Royal, Wolfville, Hants North, Advocate Harbour, New Glasgow, the Strait-Richmond area, Inverness, and Musquodoboit Valley. Nurse practitioners work with family physicians and are able to diagnose and treat certain illnesses, order certain tests, X-rays, and ultrasounds, and prescribe some medications. These new positions are in addition to existing nurse practitioners in Pictou, Caledonia, Springhill, Halifax, and Long and Brier Islands.
- A recruitment incentive was started for experienced nurses who want to get back into the work force. The province will pay for most of the cost of a re-entry program for those who agree to work in Nova Scotia for one year after they finish training.

PRIORITY

Make health and wellness information readily available across the province through Nova Scotia's public libraries. A new partnership with the Alzheimer Society—to expand the availability of quality print resources—will serve as a model for the Health Charities Network. (Education)

The Alzheimer Society placed additional materials in regional libraries during the year and also recommended additional materials for library collections. The success of this partnership generated discussions with other health organizations. Breast Cancer Action Nova Scotia has received funding from the IWK External Grants Program for a project that will include donations of materials to regional libraries and promotion of regional libraries as sources of consumer health information.

Measuring Our Performance

The following measures track some of the important factors that influence our health and the health-care system.

SMOKING AMONG YOUTH

Outcome: Improved health

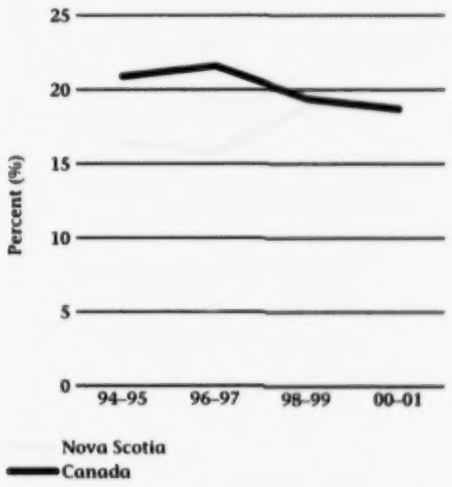
Healthy lifestyles are key to healthy populations. Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disability, and high rates of smoking translate into high rates of chronic diseases such as lung cancer and heart and respiratory disease. Reducing youth smoking is key to the prevention of smoking-related illness and to the promotion of healthy populations.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure describes the percentage of youth (aged 12–19 years) in Nova Scotia and Canada who smoke. Habits adopted during the teen years tend to be maintained well into adult life. Therefore, this measure tells us about smoking among young people as well as about the number of adults who may be smokers in the future. Preventing or limiting smoking among young people has important long-term benefits, such as reduced smoking among adults and the prevention of serious illness.

Percentage of Youth (12–19) Who Smoke

Nova Scotia vs Canada, 1994–95 to 2000–01



Due to high coefficients of variability, use Nova Scotia data for 1994–95 through 1998–99 with caution.

Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Where are we now?

Data for this measure are collected every two years, so we continue to use the 2000–01 results in this report.

Rates of smoking among youth (and adults) are higher than they should be. In 2001, 18.9 per cent of Nova Scotia's youth (aged 12–19 years) smoked, compared with 16.5 per cent in 1994–1995. Youth smoking in Nova Scotia has increased, while the number of youth smoking in Canada as a whole has decreased. In Canada, the

smoking rate among youth declined to 18.7 per cent from 20.9 per cent.

To counter and prevent smoking by adults and youth, the Department of Health launched a Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy in 2001, addressing seven key components: taxation, smoke-free places legislation, treatment/cessation, community-based programs, youth prevention, media awareness, and monitoring and evaluation.

It should be noted that youth smoking rates vary with the data source used, primarily because of the age range and methodology applied. These data are from a database agreed to by the federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Health.

Where do we want to be?

Our aim is to decrease the percentage of youth who smoke. Strategies to achieve this target include continued implementation of all components of the Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy.

BODY MASS INDEX ABOVE THE HEALTHY RANGE

Outcome: Improved health

A normal body weight (for height) is associated with a reduced risk of health problems. Excessive weight and obesity are associated with increased risk of health problems and conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, gall bladder disease, and complications during pregnancy. Body weight is influenced by genetics, gender, age, and lifestyle factors such as poor eating habits and inadequate physical activity. Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating (1992) recommend that Canadians "achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by enjoying regular physical activity and healthy eating." Nova Scotians need to be supported through education and skills, policy, and enhanced community capacity to adopt and maintain healthy body weights, healthy eating, and physical activity behaviours.

What does the measure tell us?

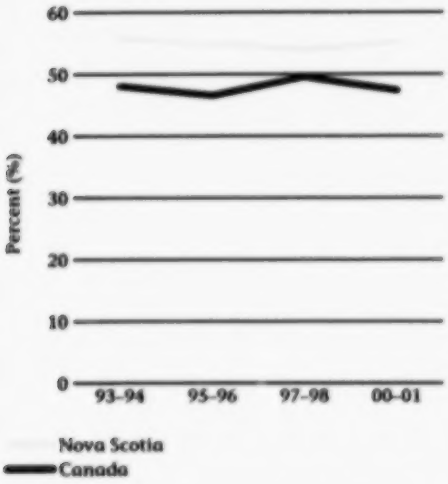
The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a valid measurement of weight in relation to height for healthy adults aged 18–65 years. This is a common method for calculating whether an individual's weight is in a healthy range. BMI is not recommended for use as the sole measurement of either body composition or level of physical fitness. According to new Health Canada weight classification guidelines (2003), a BMI between 20 and 25 is considered within a normal range.

Where are we now?

Data for this measure, like smoking rates, are collected every two years, so we continue to use the 2000–2001 results in this report.

Body Mass Index in Excess of Health Range (25+)

Nova Scotia vs Canada, 1993–94 to 2000–01



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Since 1993, the percentage of Nova Scotians who have a BMI above 25 is greater than the Canadian population in general. In 2000–2001, 55.2 per cent of Nova Scotians reported a BMI above 25, as compared with 47.4 per cent of the Canadian population.

The data in this report differ from those described in the 2002–2003 business plan because the data sources are different. That is, the 2002–2003 business plan used the Canadian standard for reporting BMI whereas data in this report use the international standard to promote consistency with national reporting standards.

Where do we want to be?

By 2004–2005, with partners at multiple levels and sectors, the Nova Scotia government aims to contain the rate of increase of the number of Nova Scotians whose body weight raises their risk for health problems. The Department of Health will collaborate with the Nova Scotia Alliance for Healthy Eating and other public health services to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

Outcome: Improved health

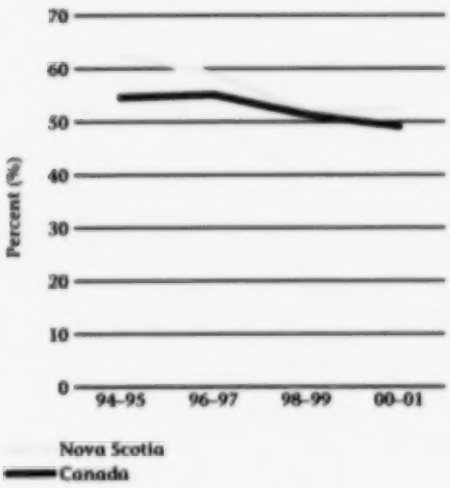
Physical inactivity is an important indicator of unhealthy behaviour. Inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease and depression, while regular physical activity provides important health benefits.

What does the measure tell us?

Physical inactivity is measured by calculating the proportion of the population aged 12 years and older who report being physically active less than once per week or never. The province's goal is to increase physical activity among Nova Scotians.

Percentage Reporting Little or No Physical Activity

Nova Scotia vs Canada, 1994–95 to 2000–01



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Where are we now?

Data for this measure are collected every two years. We continue to use the 2000–2001 results in this report.

In 2000–2001, 52.6 per cent of Nova Scotians reported being physically active less than once per week or never, as compared with 49.1 per cent of Canadians.

Where do we want to be?

Regular physical activity is associated with many benefits, including improved cardiovascular and mental health. The province's goal is to increase physical activity through joint initiatives such as the Active Kids/Healthy Kids Strategy and the Chronic Disease-Prevention Strategy.

In February 2003, the federal Minister of Health and the provincial/territorial Ministers responsible for Sport and Recreation announced their intention to increase by 10 per cent the number of people in each province who are physically active enough to achieve health benefits by 2010. For Nova Scotia, this means this measure will change from Physical Inactivity to Physical Activity. With that change, the measure will be that 47.4 per cent of Nova Scotians are physically active (instead of 52.6 per cent being inactive), and the goal will be to increase the percentage of Nova Scotians who are physically active to 57.4 per cent by 2010.

VACCINATION COVERAGE (FLU SHOT)

Outcome: Improved health

Vaccination coverage is important in promoting and maintaining public health and preventing the spread of infectious disease.

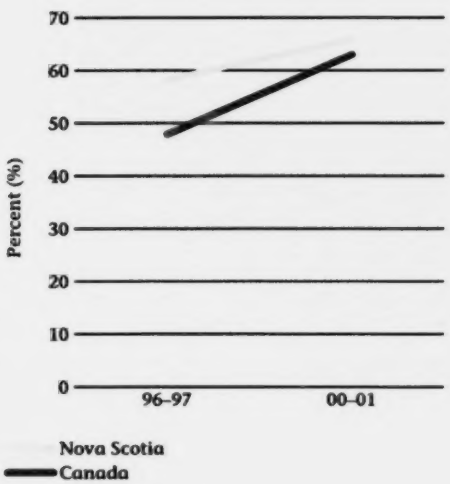
What does the measure tell us?

Vaccination coverage is measured by calculating the percentage of people (aged 65 years and older) who reported having a flu shot in the past year. By increasing the number of people who receive flu

shots, we can decrease the burden of illness on vulnerable populations—such as the elderly—and reduce the strain on the health system at the same time.

Seniors (65+) Immunized for Flu in the Past Year

Nova Scotia vs Canada, 1996–97 to 2000–01



Source: National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada.

Where are we now?

Data for this measure are collected every two years, so we continue to use 2000–2001 results in this report.

During 2000–2001, 66 per cent of the Nova Scotia population over 65 years of age reported having had a flu shot in the past year, as compared with 63 per cent of all Canadians 65 or older. This shows an improvement since 1996–1997, when 58.3 per cent of Nova Scotians and 47.9 per cent of Canadians reported having received flu shots. Overall, Nova Scotia compares very favourably with other provinces. Decreases in the hospitalization of people with influenza and pneumonia may reflect the success of the immunization program and aggressive public awareness campaigns. The data in this report (66 per cent) differ from those described in the 2002–2003 business plan (62.0 per cent) because the data sources are different: the 2002–2003 business plan used data from the Nova Scotia Department of Health (surveillance system), whereas data in this report come from the National Population Health Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey. This change reflects the standards adopted for federal/provincial/territorial reporting.

Where do we want to be?

Immunization against the flu is an important public health intervention. By 2004–2005, the province aims to increase to 80 per cent the percentage of the population aged 65 years and older who receive influenza vaccinations.

HEALTH HUMAN-RESOURCE POSITIONS FILLED

Outcome: Access to quality health care

One way to enhance access to quality health care is to ensure the appropriate number and distribution of health-care providers.

What does the measure tell us?

One measure of the supply and distribution of health personnel is the percentage of primary health human-resource positions filled in under-served areas, defined as those with a history of recruitment and retention difficulties, where recruiting by local committees has been unsuccessful for more than six months, and where the medical needs of the community are not being otherwise served. Those areas that are designated as "under-served" have incentive programs to support physician recruitment. The total number of under-served areas can change over time. In February 2003, 44 areas were defined as being under-served.

Where are we now?

In February 2003, all but seven physician positions were filled in under-served areas (84 per cent). The total number of physicians in under-served areas changes rapidly because of natural fluctuations (deaths, retirements, and the voluntary relocation of providers within the province) and successful recruitment. Ongoing recruitment efforts are required to maintain or exceed the provincial target (80 per cent). More jurisdictions in Canada are engaging advanced practice nurses and non-physician throughout the health care system to enhance access to quality health care. Nova Scotia is continuing a pilot project in Long and Brier Islands in which paramedics and a nurse practitioner work in close collaboration with a physician to provide primary care services. In addition, the Department of Health is engaged in health human resource planning to address the supply and distribution of health professionals and other workers across the province.

Where do we want to be?

Nova Scotia's target is to have 80 per cent or more health human-resource positions filled in under-served areas of Nova Scotia. The Department of Health has continued to support physician recruitment initiatives throughout the province through website listings of vacancies, a recruitment guide, advertising, and incentives.

NOVA SCOTIA

PERCENTAGE OF AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES WITHIN NINE MINUTES

Outcome: Access to quality health care

One of the ways in which access to quality emergency health services may be assessed is by calculating response times from ambulance dispatch to arrival at the emergency scene.

What does the measure tell us?

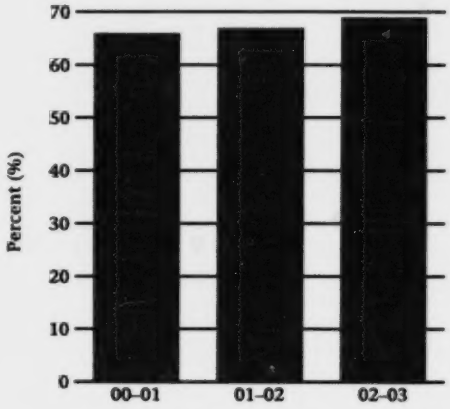
The industry standard for response time from ambulance dispatch to arrival at the emergency scene is nine minutes or less 90 per cent of the time for urban/densely populated areas. This standard is based on the survivability of cardiac arrest patients. The shorter the response time interval, the greater the chance of survival.

Where are we now?

In 2002–2003, for 69 per cent of all emergency calls in the province, ambulances arrived at an emergency scene in nine minutes or less. For calls in urban/densely populated areas, ambulances arrived at an emergency scene 90 per cent of the time in nine minutes or less. This performance is an increase over 2001–2002.

Percentage of Ambulance Response Times Within Nine Minutes

Nova Scotia, 2000–01 to 2002–03



Source: Emergency Health Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health.

Where do we want to be?

The Nova Scotia government has defined a target of 68 per cent (by 2004–2005) for response times of nine minutes or less from ambulance dispatch to arrival at the emergency scene. This target is for all emergency calls.

Education and Learning

The Government of Nova Scotia increased its investment in education and training in 2002–2003 to promote a continuum of learning opportunities from the early years through late adulthood. There were a number of significant initiatives in public school education, skill development, and higher education and adult learning.

Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success was announced in fall 2002 to guide efforts to improve education for Nova Scotians from birth to adulthood. Priorities include more support for students in the early years, a focus on basics—reading, writing, and mathematics—promotion of good-quality teaching, support to parents in encouraging student achievement, and maintaining healthy, safe school environments.

The government moved forward with a comprehensive approach to adult education programs and services and labour market training for Nova Scotians. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework and Action Plan was developed in 2002–2003 to coordinate education and training for adults so that Nova Scotians will be ready and able to fill the job requirements of the economy—today and tomorrow.

The government continued to improve programs for adult education and learning. The province's apprenticeship system was updated to make it easier and faster to complete trades training. More adults also took advantage of community and family literacy programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.

The government emphasized accountability at all levels of the education system, ranging from better reporting of the results of each student to installing new computer systems to track financial results of school boards.

The increased spending on education is an investment in Nova Scotia's future that will strengthen the economy in general and enhance the well-being of our citizens for many years to come.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Continue the Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs *initiative to provide support for the literacy development of students in grades primary–6 and expand the program to provide increased support for grade 7 students.* (Education)

The government continued with the *Active Young Readers* program in 2002–2003 to support literacy development for students in grades primary to 7. Students have access to a wider range of learning resources and to teachers with increased expertise in reading assessment, instruction, and support.

It is expected that, over time, *Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs* initiatives will result in more students reading successfully by the end of grade 3 and more students reading at the fluent stages and using literacy skills strategically for learning across the curriculum by the end of grade 6.

The government is aiming to see improvement in students' reading achievement as measured by provincial reading assessments in grades 6 and 9 and by other assessments, such as School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) reading assessments for 13-year-old students and Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) reading assessments for 15-year-olds.

In 2002–2003, additional learning resources were provided to all schools for grades primary–3 and 4–6: *An Active Young Readers Atlantic Canada Collection One* package and *Active Young Readers Resource Support: Grades 4–6*. The Department of Education also developed an *Active Young Readers Administrators Resource* for primary–6 schools.

Students having difficulty with reading development benefitted from expanded opportunities for early intervention, such as Reading Recovery and ongoing effective intervention and support within their classrooms. There were more learning resources and high-quality instruction, intervention, and support for their specific needs.

The *Active Young Readers: Grades 4–6 Assessment Resource* was designed and developed in 2002–2003 and was scheduled for distribution in October 2003. The department has continued its participation in the development of a grade 4–6 literacy assessment resource, due for completion in January 2004. French literacy resources were provided to schools offering grades 4–6 French immersion programs.

An implementation workshop for *Active Young Readers 7* was conducted for 100 teacher leaders. Resources provided included 104,085 student books and professional resources for administrators and resource teachers. All grade 7 teachers had two days of professional development. Additional workshops were provided for P–6 and grade 7 literacy teams. Three summer institutes were also held.

PRIORITY

Introduce the Writers in Action initiative, beginning at grade 4, emphasizing grammar usage, spelling, and punctuation to ensure that all students have access to structured, sequential language instruction; broaden Écrivains à l'oeuvre, for Acadian students in grades 4 to 7, to include grammar, punctuation, and spelling strategies. (Education)

The *Writers in Action* initiative was designed to help students learn grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation to enhance their writing skills.

In 2002–2003, all grade 4 students received a reference copy of the *Writers in Action Handbook*. This is used by students to revise, edit, and proofread their written work for clarity, effectiveness, and precision—in school or at home.

Their parents received a *Writers in Action* pamphlet to make them more knowledgeable about how they can support their children's writing development.

A key part of this initiative is building teachers' expertise in teaching writing.

An implementation workshop was conducted for 87 teacher leaders, and grades 4–6 teachers participated in a one-day professional development program. In addition, grade 4 teachers received a related reference book.

The expected results are that, over time, a higher percentage of students will meet the expected level of achievement in writing as measured by provincial writing assessments in grades 6 and 9.

PRIORITY

Coordinate, through partnerships, programs that create a clear pathway for adults seeking credits toward the Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults. The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) will identify adult learning priorities and develop strategies to help attract participants. (Education)

The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) gives adults a chance to improve their literacy and essential

skills and/or complete their high school education.

Programs offered are tuition-free and help Nova Scotians acquire the skills and credentials needed for further learning in order to make the transition to the world of work, to enhance their employability, and/or to develop to their full potential.

Learners gain self-confidence and foundational skills that will help them to achieve their personal and career-related goals.

The NSSAL provided over $3.3 million in funding in 2002–2003 to support Adult Learning Program (Level 3 and 4) and public school program credits (grades 11 and 12) leading to the Nova Scotia High School Graduation diploma for Adults.

More than 1,800 adults were enrolled, and over 400 received their diplomas. NSSAL also provided $2.5 million to community-based programs for adults (at Level 1 and 2). Approximately 40 programs served over 2,100 learners.

Curriculum development and revision took place for Levels 3 and 4. An electronic Student Information and Management System (SIMS) was developed during 2002–2003 to be implemented in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Implement a strategy to improve student achievement in mathematics at all grade levels. The strategy has five themes: new classroom programs; books and "school tools" for students; support for quality teaching; more time for math; and accountability for progress.
(Education)

Through this long-range mathematics initiative, each school for grades primary to 9 will have one or more math leaders to provide leadership and support at the site level. Students will benefit from having teachers with more expertise in mathematics teaching. Teachers will benefit from increased access to professional development that addresses areas in which they require more expertise. Grade-level resources will help teachers to plan and deliver an effective, coherent mathematics program and to make optimum use of available instructional time.

In 2002–2003, the initial training provided to school-based math leaders supported their professional growth and provided common materials and approaches to school-based in-service.

The positive response of teachers, students, and parents to the Math Plus pilots indicated that these new course

options would offer increased support to students in mathematics and result in increased opportunities for their success in earning mathematics credits (graduation level and academic level).

Students had more time alloted for mathematics learning and more access to a range of learning tools including manipulatives. While their attitudes to mathematics were more positive than before their Math Plus experience, more data will be required to determine the extent to which the Math Plus options result in a measurable improvement in achievement.

Nova Scotia examinations were administered in June 2002 and January 2003 for Mathématiques 12, Mathématiques avancées 12, and Calcul différentiel et intégral 12.

A Junior High Mathematics Program Assessment was administered to all grade 8 students in June 2002. Student results were below expectations, indicating a need to continue the enhanced focus on mathematics in the curriculum.

PRIORITY

Undertake a professional development strategy for adult literacy practitioners throughout the Community Learning Initiative, another community-based partnership. (Education)

The Department of Education collaborated in 2002–2003 with Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning service providers—colleges, school boards, and community literacy organizations—to enhance the quality of programs delivered and ensure that adult educators have access to relevant professional development.

Current priorities include integrating five themes throughout the curriculum: literacy, numeracy, employability, information technology, and inclusiveness.

The goal is to ensure a more strategic and coordinated strategy for professional development: one that is based on stakeholder input, is linked to the delivery of the curriculum, and is responsive to adult learners.

Six workshops were held to introduce learner intake assessment tools and learner portfolios to 120 adult literacy practitioners, in partnership with the Cape Breton Literacy Network.

Seven workshops were held concerning decision-making tools for literacy networks to 120 adult literacy

practitioners, in partnership with the West Hants Learning Network. The department worked with the National Literacy Secretariat and Human Resources Development Canada to secure funding for communication and professional development projects for the NSSAL regional planning teams.

PRIORITY

Extend the opportunity for lifelong learning to people in small and rural communities through the Virtual Library initiative, which gives on-line access to books and other library services. (Education)

A virtual library has been implemented in every public library in the province. This has made library services available to those without easy physical access to a branch and to those who wish to use the services after hours.

Nova Scotians made good use of the virtual library in 2002–2003. The provincial library reported that there were 1,122,173 on-line visits to the library, 5,921 on-line information questions answered, and 53,005 remote searches of on-line database; 2,977 people registered for a library card on line; and 23 on-line programs were held involving 1,500 people.

PRIORITY

Work with business, labour, and educational institutions to improve the skill level of Nova Scotia's current and new members of the work force. (Education)

Nova Scotia's labour market strategy has four main elements, all of which progressed considerably in 2003–2003:

- development of a comprehensive Skills Nova Scotia Strategy
- creation of a Partners Forum for labour market advice
- development of labour market information products and services
- funding mechanisms to support strategic investment

In spring 2002, the Department of Education was designated as the lead department for skills, and a new Skills and Learning Branch was established in October 2002. A *Skills Nova Scotia Working Paper* was released for consultation as a follow-up to the first Premier's Forum on Skills in June 2002. Public consultations were held in July and August concerning the government's framework for labour market skills development.

In summer 2002, a multi-department/agency Labour Force Planning Committee was formed. The *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003*

Action Plan was released in January 2003. The Skills Nova Scotia Annual Progress Report for 2002–2003 was begun.

The process to initiate the Partners' Advisory Council on Workforce Skills (PAC) began with a call for membership nominations in February 2003. The PAC will provide advice and guidance on current skill development and labour market issues and on future trends to the Deputy Minister's Committee on Skills and the Minister of Education.

A new edition of *Career Options: An Occupational Handbook for Nova Scotians* (print and Internet versions) was released and *Career Options: A Guide to Nova Scotia's Changing Labour Market* was distributed to all grade 9 students in the province.

A series of labour market outlook publications was produced and distributed, including *Labour Market Outlook, Industrial Outlook,* and *Occupational Outlook.*

A federal/provincial Labour Market Information Committee was created with a mandate to develop a coherent and coordinated approach to the collection, analysis, and delivery of labour market information in Nova Scotia.

The priorities of the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) going into 2002–2003 included youth, information technology, literacy, and employability. In September 2002, the initiation of a federal and provincial skills agenda led to the identification of new skills priorities and the renewal of the governance structure of the LMDA. Key areas identified for joint work were apprenticeship, learning and earning, employability, career development and employment counselling, labour market information, immigration, literacy, information technology, and entrepreneurship.

In October 2002, four federal/provincial working groups were established to draft policy papers, which were presented in December 2002. In January 2003, a working group was struck to develop a new governance structure for the LMDA. By March 2003, a governance structure for the Canada–Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework, which encompasses the LMDA, was created.

PRIORITY

Update the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act to meet the requirements of today's labour market; continue the Youth Pathways and Transitions program to enhance the career options for high school students interested in trades careers. (Education)

Public consultations were held across the province in April 2002. A draft report, titled *Apprenticeship: Achieving Excellence*

through Partnership, was completed in June and released in December 2002. The report has 25 recommendations, which will be reviewed, and an action plan will be developed in 2003–2004.

New legislation on apprenticeship trades and qualifications was being developed in 2002–2003 to reposition the former apprenticeship training program as a comprehensive system. This will include the following:

- a Youth Apprenticeship program to provide essential skills for apprentices, which will expose high school students to occupations in the skilled trades and technologies essential to Nova Scotia's plan to manage impending skill shortages due to the aging work force
- a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) policy that will allow apprentices to complete their apprenticeship in a more timely fashion
- an accreditation process for training providers to improve the quality of training provided
- more training for apprentices and journeypersons

PRIORITY

Help post-secondary students get critical energy industry experience through a new training initiative that provides incentives to small- and medium-size local onshore/offshore firms to hire students and a diploma program that will start this fall in partnership with PanCanadian Energy and Ocean Rig ASA.
(Education, NSCC, Energy)

The Energy Training Program for Students was developed to encourage private-sector employers to hire Nova Scotian post-secondary students for career-related work terms in all sectors of the energy industry.

Employers can hire Nova Scotia university and community college students and recent graduates from a wide range of disciplines. In 2002–2003, more than 70 students were matched with 40 employers, giving the students hands-on work experience to prepare them for the highly skilled energy sector work force.

Also, an Offshore Operations Program was developed for delivery from the Marconi Campus, NSCC, to provide critical industry experience to post-secondary students. The program will be offered in partnership with Encana, Ocean Rig, and J. D. Irving. Industry

partners will jointly recruit students for the program and provide offers of employment for the graduates. Intake was to start in fall 2003.

PRIORITY

Publish the results of student results on provincial, national, and international assessments in language arts, mathematics, and science in an annual Minister's Report to Parents, and implement an action plan, focusing on the early years, classroom support, literacy and mathematics, quality of instruction, and accountability. (Education)

The second annual *Minister's Report to Parents* was published, including a summary of results for provincial, national, and international assessments administered in 2002.

The *Minister's Report to Parents: 2002* highlighted the need for the department to focus its attention and resources on mathematics and literacy. Student performance in mathematics, provincially and nationally, was below expectations. Our students did not perform as well as students in the rest of Canada in writing, according to the national assessment. However, student performance did improve in chemistry and physics.

PRIORITY

Enhance school board accountability, information management, and standardized business practices with the installation in all seven school boards of SAP finance, procurement, and business warehouse modules, along with human resouces, maintenance, and student administrative systems. (Education, Finance)

The Government of Nova Scotia has been working with school boards to implement SAP systems, which will help ensure consistency in financial records and reporting and efficient management of school board resources.

Phase 1 of the integrated data management strategy, or IDMP, was complete in April 1, 2002, when seven school boards implemented the Finance, Procurement, and Business Warehouse modules of SAP.

During 2002–2003, the system was used to support financial management of the regional boards and generate regular monthly financial reports and year-end financial statements. The system will be used to generate comparable information among school boards. A business support unit was established within the Department of Education to support the system and to ensure consistency of information.

The government also included school boards in planning and scoping of the SAP-HR project in 2002–2003. The new payroll and human resource management system is scheduled for implementation in fall 2004. This will provide integration between the human resource management systems and other financial management systems, improve human resource management information, and generate efficiencies in payroll processing costs.

A definition of the Preventative Maintenance (Plant Maintenance) module requirements is scheduled to be complete by June 2004.

PRIORITY

Improve communications between the Department of Education and public school students through the Provincial Student Education Council, which will give students a voice in education decisions and provide them with new opportunities for leadership development and training.
(Education)

The Provincial Student Education Council (PSEC) was given a resource person through the government's Career Starts Internship Program, which provides work experience for new graduates. In addition to the full-time staff resource, meeting expenses and travel costs for council members were covered.

The council is intended to promote direct engagement of students in the discussion of issues that affect the education system. In 2002–2003, at the request of the Minister of Education, PSEC considered three questions related to bullying in schools and presented a report on the subject. The recommendations in the report have influenced how the department is responding to concerns about bullying.

The PSEC staff person provided assistance with background research and logistical support. This has enabled many more youth to be involved in addressing questions of bullying and students' rights.

PRIORITY

Obtain the advice of the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities on issues including quality assurance, accountability, and the role and capacity of post-secondary institutions.
(Education)

The department has had ongoing discussions with the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities on issues including quality assurance, accountability, and the role and capacity of post-secondary institutions. These will be carried over into future years.

PRIORITY

Through an Innovation Trust Fund, administered by the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents, the Nova Scotia Community College, and Collège de l'Acadie, help universities and colleges leverage investments from the private sector, attract more, highly qualified research professionals to the province, and pursue new projects and secure more research grants and business contracts.
(Education)

The Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust Fund was set up with $15 million. To the end of fiscal 2002–2003, $4.3 million had been awarded in matching funds to 33 Canadian Foundation for Innovation–approved projects, leaving a balance of approximately $11 million for allocation to future projects.

PRIORITY

Develop transition-to-employment programs for Nova Scotians with disabilities involved in post-secondary training through the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) initiative.
(Education, Community Services)

In summer 2002, this program provided employment to 37 students with disabilities, through cost-sharing with the private sector.

As a group, students with disabilities in post secondary training who participated in EAPD programs have retention and graduation rates equal to or better than the mainstream student population. The graduation rates for students with disabilities will be available through a follow-up survey in March 2004. Goods and services are provided to remove or reduce barriers stemming from disabilities, including tuition, note takers, attendant care, American Sign Language interpreters, and assistive technology aids.

PRIORITY

Introduce the Racial Equity Policy and hold a Human Rights in Education Conference in fall 2002 to highlight and raise awareness of the issues outlined in the policy. (Education)

A Human Rights in Education Conference was held in fall 2002 to highlight and raise awareness of issues outlined in the Racial Equity Policy. Grants are available to school boards to implement the policy, and evaluations of grant proposals will be carried out in spring 2004.

PRIORITY

As part of the full introduction of the Canadian history requirement this year, provide school boards with assistance to implement the revised African Canadian History 11 and Mi'kmaq Studies 10 courses. (Education)

Histoire du Canada 11 Immersion/Extended Core French was implemented in September 2002. The French translation of the curriculum guide was distributed to schools in February 2003.

The new Canadian history courses give students a better understanding of who they are, where they come from, and how their ancestors played a role in the history and development of Canada. This understanding contributes to students' perceptions of what it means to be a Canadian citizen, their roles and responsibilities as Canadian citizens, and what is involved in full and active participation in the Canadian democracy.

Several course options are offered for students to acquire this credit:

- Canadian History 11/Histoire du Canada 11 (Immersion)
- African Canadian Studies 11
- Mi'kmaw Studies 10
- Études acadiennes 11
- Histoire du Canada 11
- Gaelic Studies 11

These courses help students to analyse historical and contemporary issues related to ethno-cultural heritage. Students gain a greater respect for the contributions of Acadians, African Canadians, the Gaels, and the Mi'kmaq to the history and culture of Canada.

In 2002–2003, the following activities and resources were provided to support this initiative:

- An implementation leadership workshop was held for 80 teacher leaders.
- Twenty teacher leaders were sponsored to attend an eight-day institute.

- Eighteen teacher leaders received training as workshop facilitators.
- Resources, including curriculum guides, were provided to Canadian History 11 students and teachers.
- Grants were provided to boards to support implementation.

PRIORITY

Continue the delivery of 19 school capital projects by 2004: six were completed by the fall 2001, one was completed in March 2002, and another eight will be under development in 2002–2003. (Education, Transportation and Public Works)

The following schools were completed and occupied in 2002–2003:

- Halifax West High School
- St. Anthony Daniel Elementary in Sydney

The following schools were designed and under construction:

- South Colchester High School
- Pictou East High School
- Pictou West High School
- Windsor High School

The following schools were being planned and designed:

- Truro Junior High School
- Sydney Elementary
- Shelburne High School

In addition, work was carried out on major additions and alterations projects on six schools. Renovation projects with a value of $2.8 million to improve conditions of 40 other schools were completed.

The School Capital Construction Committee evaluated school capital needs identified by school boards and submitted a report to the Minister of Education in September 2002.

PRIORITY

Provide quality education and training for a global labour market through the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. NSAC will build on its current involvement in research, particularly climate change, organic farming, and bio-engineering, and expand this activity and expertise. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College awarded $725,000 worth of scholarships to over 200 students at the 2002 autumn assembly, helping to attract top students.

The college hired a Climate Change Research Chair and Canada Research Chair on water resource management to enable a full program of research concentrating on water resource management.

The college also offered a series of four courses on organic agriculture for Internet delivery and provided customized training

for adult learners such as the Nova Scotia Agricultural College–Millbrook Aquaculture and Horticulture Program.

PRIORITY

Assist Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie with their merger to become a university/college for the Acadian/French population of Nova Scotia, achieving both critical mass and a wider delivery capacity. (Education)

Both the Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie had been struggling over the past number of years with low enrolment levels. The province is committed to promoting the long-term sustainability of French post-secondary education in Nova Scotia.

As a result, Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie completed a merger in 2002–2003. The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia agreed to fund the institutions based on a five-year business plan.

The merger of the two institutions is intended to build on their respective strengths and create a province-wide delivery system. It is anticipated that new and innovative programs will be developed in order to attract new students and create an enrolment level that will sustain the new institution.

Measuring Our Performance

The following measures provide a snapshot of key areas of the educational system.

SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR PROGRAM

Outcome: Better Educated Nova Scotians

What does the measure tell us?

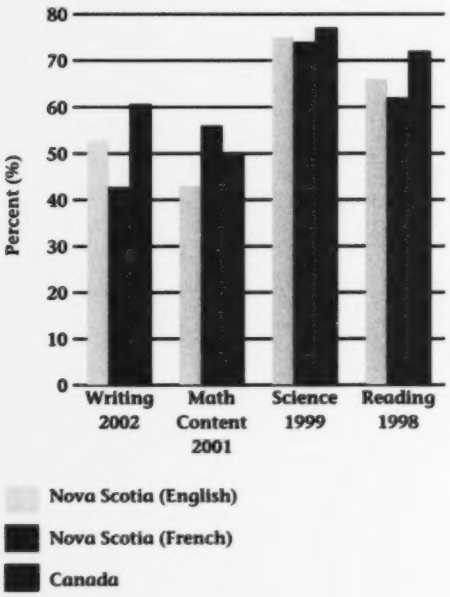
SAIP, a national assessment program, assesses 13- and 16-year-old students in mathematics, reading, science, and writing. The data reported below are based on the results of 16-year-old students only. These students have had the longest exposure to the public school program in mathematics, reading, science, and writing. SAIP has five levels of performance. Each level has a description of student performance. The national standard for the performance of 16-year-old students is set at level 3. This measure shows the percentage of Nova Scotia students achieving level 3 or higher.

Where are we now?

The 2002 results of Nova Scotia English and French students in SAIP writing were below the national average. In 2001, math content results for 16-year-old English students were below the national

Nova Scotia SAIP Results

Percentage of 16-Year-Olds at Level 3 or Higher



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education.

average, while the results for French students were above the national average. In 1998, the Nova Scotia results for reading were below the national average. For science, the results in 1999 for Nova Scotia and Canada were fairly close. The "writing instrument" used in 2002 varied a great deal from the "writing instrument" used in 1998. According to SAIP documents, it is not appropriate to compare the periods of 1998 and 2002.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is for the results of the reading assessment to increase to 72 per cent of 16-year-old students being at level 3 or higher by the 2005 assessment. The 2002 assessment results for writing will be a base for comparing future assessments. The target for the mathematics results for English students is 50 per cent in the 2006 assessment, and the results for French students are targeted to increase. The results of the 2004 science assessment are targeted to be higher than the results of the 1999 assessment. Several activities undertaken in 2001–2002 are expected to help students achieve, such as *Active Young Readers/Jeunes Lecteurs Actifs, Writers in Action/Ecrivains à l' oeuvre, Reading Recovery*, the Time to Learn strategy, and the provision of teacher resources and professional development. The *Minister's Action Plan: Building Quality, Standards, and Accountability in Education* outlines a number of initiatives to help improve student performance.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

Outcome: Better Educated Nova Scotians

What does the measure tell us?

The graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students in grade 9 three years earlier.

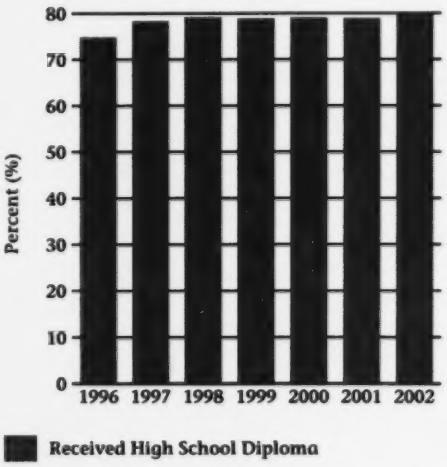
Education is a key variable in improved employment prospects and higher earnings. The successful pursuit of further education depends upon high school graduation. This is the foundation upon which an individual's future success is built.

Where are we now?

The graduation rate for the 2001–2002 year was 80 per cent, showing a slight increase over the 2000–2001 rate of 79 per cent. Historically, this matches the increase of the 1999–2000 graduation rate of 79.1 per cent and is higher than the 74.9 per cent reported in 1995–1996.

Grade 12 Graduation Rate

(Compared to the Number of Students in Grade 9 Three Years Earlier)



For the school year ending June 30th.
Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to have this percentage continue to increase. Senior high students can choose course options that are consistent with their post-secondary plans, be they university, community college, trades, or the job market. It is expected that having opportunities to prepare for the various post-secondary pathways will keep students motivated to graduate from high school.

NOVA SCOTIANS WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Outcome: Better Educated Nova Scotians

What does the measure tell us?

This measure shows the percentage of Nova Scotians aged 25–54 that have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

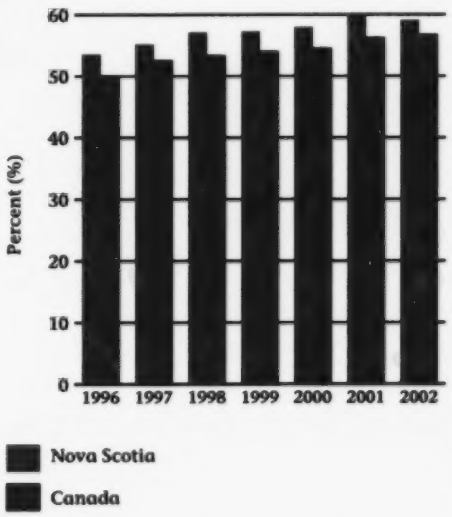
Education is a key variable in improved employment prospects and higher earnings. The attainment of post-secondary education prepares Nova Scotians for the labour market. Research conducted by the federal government suggests that 70 per cent of new jobs will require some form of post-secondary education.

Where are we now?

In 2002, the percentage of Nova Scotians aged 25–54 with a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree was 59.1 per cent, essentially unchanged from

59.9 per cent in 2001. The percentage of Nova Scotians aged 25–54 with post-secondary education continues to be higher than that for Canada.

Percentage of Nova Scotians and Canadians (25–54) with Post-Secondary Education



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review.

Where do we want to be?

Our target continues to be to increase the percentage of Nova Scotians with post-secondary education. Several initiatives are being undertaken to help with access to post-secondary education. These include the development of a discussion paper for post-secondary education focusing on future size and capacity, quality, and accountability; increased funding to the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC); ensuring that education and training opportunities at the NSCC are linked to economic opportunities in the province; and a new designation policy for post-secondary institutions.

PARTICIPATION IN THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL FOR ADULT LEARNING

Outcome: Better Educated Nova Scotians

What does the measure tell us?

The measure provides data on the number of Nova Scotians participating in literacy and upgrading programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning supports the delivery of adult education programs that allow Nova Scotians to improve their literacy skills and earn credits toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

Nova Scotians need opportunities to continue to learn throughout their lives. As the labour market changes, Nova Scotians need to develop new skills, improve their literacy, and upgrade existing skills. It is not enough just to provide access to programs; we need to ensure that Nova Scotians participate in these programs. This measure is an indication of participation of adults in lifelong learning.

Where are we now?

From September 1, 2001, to June 15, 2002, 3,764 Nova Scotians participated in programs supported through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. From September 1, 2002, to August 31, 2003, the number grew to 4,601.

Where do we want to be?

We want to continue to increase enrolment in adult learning programs. Enrolment for 2003–2004 is expected to rise due to funding increases to the program.

P–12 COMPUTER RATIO

Outcome: A technology-enhanced learning environment

What does the measure tell us?

There are two measures that can be included for this item. The first reports the ratio of total students to total computers. The second reports the ratio of total students to current computers, where current computers are defined as those computers with 200 MHZ or better. Current computers enable students to use current software.

The Information Economy Initiative (IEI)—a federal/provincial project that leverages investment for Internet connections, hardware, software, technical support, and professional development for schools, universities, and communities across Nova Scotia—has provided hundreds of computers to schools throughout Nova Scotia. Computers are also provided to schools through the Technology Recycling Program, a private-public partnership that refurbishes used computer equipment for distribution to schools throughout Nova Scotia. These computers support student learning and achievement and prepare them for today's labour market where technology and communications are so important.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2003, there were 5.1 students for every computer, and 6.7 students for every computer with 200 MHZ

P-12 Computer Ratio and Number of Classes with Three or More Computers

	2002	2003
Ratio of Total Students to Total Computers	6.2	5.1
Ratio of Total Students to Current Computers (200MHz or better)	9.3	6.7
Number of Classrooms with Three or More Current Computers	2088	2111

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Education, March 31 figures.

or better. A total of 2,111 classrooms had three or more current computers.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2005–2006 is a ratio of 5 to 1, in terms of total students to total computers. Both the IEI and the Technology Recycling Program will help provide computers to our schools.

The Economy

The Government of Nova Scotia continued with programs and initiatives in 2002–2003 to promote prosperity and self-sufficiency for Nova Scotians.

The government met its commitment to bring in a balanced budget in 2002–2003, recording a surplus of $31.6 million in the public accounts for that year. This is the first balanced budget in 40 years, and government at the same time achieved full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The government also recognized the need to make key investments in Nova Scotia's future in 2002–2003 through increased spending in strategic areas such as education and training, encouraging income assistance recipients to find work, and promoting good health in our population.

The Government of Nova Scotia plays a role in creating an economic climate that encourages businesses to invest in Nova Scotia and create jobs. Implementation of Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Prosperity, continued in 2002–2003.

Economic performance was strong overall in that year, and the economy continued to provide employment for many Nova Scotians looking for work. However, government recognized the need to support Nova Scotians in their efforts to find employment and adapt to the rapidly changing labour market. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework was released in fall 2002 to develop education and training plans that will help the province meet its economic needs.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Deliver a balanced budget in fiscal 2002–2003. (Finance)

On November 13, 2003, the Government of Nova Scotia tabled its Public Accounts for 2002–2003. The financial results show a budgetary surplus of $31.6 million for 2002–2003. The $31.6 million has been applied directly against the provincial debt, as required by legislation.

The 2002–2003 financial statements were accompanied by an unqualified audit report and are now fully compliant with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Nova Scotia is a leader in the country in GAAP compliance.

Revenues from provincial sources were significantly higher than estimated in 2002–2003, increasing by more than $100 million. Federal revenues, however, were lower than estimated by $144 million, reducing total revenues by $42 million.

Departmental spending was 1.2 per cent ($55 million) higher than estimated. Debt-servicing costs decreased by $43 million, or about half of 1 per cent.

PRIORITY

Invest in the province's economic infrastructure by increasing funding for roads and highways, including improvements such as 100-series construction, repaving of routes and trunks that enhance local economic development, and cost-shared paving of subdivision streets. (Transportation and Public Works)

Funding for capital construction of roads and highways increased in 2002–2003 by $34 million. Improvements to the infrastructure in 2002–2003 included the following:

- 100-series construction on Highways 101 and 103
- 100-series repaving on Highways 102, 107, 111, and 125
- Repaving of parts of routes, such as Route 329 (from Trunk 3 at Hubbards, southerly) 333, 337, 354 and Trunks 1, 4, and 16, which has helped to enhance local economic development
- Transportation and Public Works cost-sharing, which resulted in $2 million in paving of subdivision streets around the province

PRIORITY

Continue to provide cost-effective maintenance services for provincial roads, bridges, and ferries. Additional funds for roads will be provided by the Rural Impact Mitigation program. (Transportation and Public Works)

Transportation and Public Works completed its annual customer satisfaction and road condition surveys in 2002–2003. Public satisfaction levels were unchanged from fiscal year 2001–2002; however, for the first year in five, the overall level of satisfaction did not decline.

The road condition survey was conducted in 2002–2003 for the fourth consecutive year. Results remained the same overall, with a slight improvement. In addition, an internal review of the highway maintenance standards indicated that overall adherence to the standards has increased slightly.

The consistency in results between the surveys indicate that the increased funding the department has received over the last three years, including Road Improvement Money (formerly Rural Impact Mitigation program), may be having some impact.

PRIORITY

Assist businesses throughout Nova Scotia in identifying opportunities for business development and expansion. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) worked to promote the growth of new and existing businesses in Nova Scotia by enabling them to expand business opportunities in both local and export markets.

More than 470 companies were consulted in 2002–2003 as part of the Business Advisory Team's visitation program. The team identified opportunities to help companies expand, provided referrals and advice, and gathered information on business climate issues. An assessment survey showed that more than 95 per cent of companies found the business visitation program valuable.

NSBI made more than 1,000 business meetings and presentations to economic development partners and community organizations. NSBI also launched the Regional Business Case Analysis project to understand the assets of rural communities and local priorities for growth and investment attraction. Business leaders and representatives from regional development groups participated in the analysis.

PRIORITY

Develop a comprehensive trade plan that will give focus and direction to our trade activities. This will include an analysis of the needs of Nova Scotian companies and the best market opportunities for their products and services.
(Nova Scotia Business Inc., Economic Development)

NSBI focused on strengthening Nova Scotia's export market by assisting clients individually to identify new business opportunities in local and export markets. NSBI helped 113 export clients identify opportunities to diversify and add value to their exports. Sixty-four per cent of NSBI's Export Development clients increased their sales in 2002–2003.

Two new export services were launched: a pilot of Export Prospector, which helps companies to identify and close sales in their specific target markets, and Showstorm, which helps companies obtain competitive intelligence from trade shows related to their industry sectors. Export Prospector helped 17 companies identify leads and secure deals in their specific target markets.

A provincial trade coordinator was appointed to enhance communication with provincial trade partners and coordinate provincial export activity.

For example, NSBI and the Department of Tourism and Culture co-operated on a Boston promotion on board the high-speed "Cat," which travels between Yarmouth and Bar Harbor, Maine, to highlight business and tourism opportunities in Nova Scotia. The export development group also coordinated more than 25 export events with over 460 participants during 2002–2003.

Other export-related activities in 2002–2003 include the following:

- NSBI led five companies to Washington, DC, for a Safety and Security Sales and Development Initiative, resulting in anticipated sales of $5 million.
- NSBI organized the 18th annual Export Achievement Awards, in co-operation with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association (Nova Scotia Division), with over 400 participants.
- NSBI coordinated Nova Scotia's participation in a Trade Team Atlantic mission to New York where seven Nova Scotia companies pursued sales opportunities.

Work began, through Trade Team Nova Scotia (TTNS), a federal/provincial/private sector partnership, to develop Nova Scotia's first integrated Trade Plan. TTNS comprises 22 members with a focus of helping Nova Scotian companies export.

PRIORITY

Identify appropriate solutions for companies' financial needs—particularly in identified strategic sectors. Decisions will be made based upon the strength of the business case.
(Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

NSBI customized financial solutions to meet clients' needs, while filling financing gaps in the marketplace, often in partnership with other financial institutions.

NSBI made investments in communities throughout the province and in diverse industries. By the end of the fiscal year, the Nova Scotia Business Fund, managed by NSBI, consisted of 230 clients with investments totalling $180 million. The portfolio generated interest income of $12.7 million.

NSBI authorized new investments for 17 companies totalling $13.6 million during the past year. Seventy-five per cent of the companies financed were operating in NSBI's strategic sectors: life sciences, manufacturing, learning, energy, and information technology.

To further help entrepreneurs understand their growth potential and available financing options, NSBI launched the Capital Ideas Road Show—a series of seven practical information sessions held across the province.

NSBI completed extensive research in 2002–2003 on the province's business case, which demonstrates the competitive advantages of operating in Nova Scotia: the inherent strength in education, affordable business costs, solid infrastructure, a talented work force, and unrivalled quality of life. NSBI marketed these attributes beyond provincial borders, targeting prospects in key markets, including Boston, Washington, New York, San Francisco, and Toronto.

NSBI staff met with more than 140 prospects considering Nova Scotia for business expansion and served a wide variety of client needs—from proposing recruitment and location options to identifying business professionals and financing sources. Seven companies made investments in the province through this process.

Payroll rebates were used as a tool to help offset a portion of the costs associated with establishing a new operation in the province or expanding an existing one. This performance-based investment is paid to companies as they achieve predetermined milestones over a period of time, usually five to seven years. Last year, NSBI approved $15.5 million in payroll rebates to seven companies. Payroll rebate commitments are administered through the Government of Nova Scotia's Strategic Investment Funds (SIFs). SIF clients generate more direct

taxes than they receive in funds paid to them through payroll rebates.

PRIORITY

Combine the strengths of two related departments by merging the Technology and Science Secretariat and the Department of Economic Development to create the Office of Economic Development.
(Economic Development)

In March 2002, the government announced the merger of the Department of Economic Development and the Technology and Science Secretariat into the Office of Economic Development (OED).

The merger was the next logical step in a restructuring process started in 2002 with the introduction of the Government of Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Prosperity, the realignment of TSS, and the creation of Nova Scotia Business Inc.

During the first half of 2002–2003, extensive design work took place to build an integrated OED. New structures and systems were put in place, staffing competitions were held, and staff were consolidated at a single site at the Maritime Centre. The new OED became fully operational in fall 2002.

PRIORITY

Monitor closely the state of the Nova Scotia business climate and take action to make the province the best place in Atlantic Canada to do business.
(Economic Development)

Nova Scotia was fourth among Canadian provinces in the province's first Business Climate Index (BCI), released in 2002. The ranking system, developed for the Office of Economic Development using Statistics Canada data, factored in four categories: development capacity, economic performance, tax and fiscal environment, and business vitality.

Following release of the Business Climate Index, Economic Development staff held extensive consultations with the business community, through presentations to Chambers of Commerce across the province. Detailed written comments came from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Many suggestions have been incorporated into the 2003 Business Climate Index. The index will also be revised to reflect the most up-to-date changes in Statistics Canada data.

PRIORITY

Work with local development organizations to identify opportunities to assist communities in economic transition.
(Economic Development)

Economic Development provided ongoing support for a number of local development organizations, such as regional development authorities, the Black Business Initiative, Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, and C@P sites.

Economic Development also began the process of developing a Community Development Policy. An advisory group on Community Development Policy was formed, along with a Deputy Ministers Steering Committee. Numerous internal and external stakeholder consultations were undertaken to assist in the development of a Cape Breton Marketing Program, leading to the development of a draft program. A service package was also developed to support the implementation of Opportunities for Prosperity in rural areas and to assist communities in economic transition.

The province continued to support the Cape Breton Growth Fund through the provision of funding and staff. The growth fund has contributed to the creation of 2,800 jobs in Cape Breton since its inception.

PRIORITY

Complete implementation of the comprehensive Forestry Strategy, focusing on achieving sustainable forestry and forest use in Nova Scotia. The strategy includes expanded private sector investment in silviculture.
(Natural Resources)

A draft of the Code of Forest Practice principles document entitled "A Framework for the Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management" was completed and approved for release in 2003. Consultations were planned for 2003–2004.

Proposed changes to two regulations under the Forests Act—Registration and Statistical Returns and Forest Sustainability—were prepared and released for public comment in March 2003.

For the 2002 calendar year, the department had 35 Forest Sustainability Agreements with registered buyers. These agreements provided funding for silviculture activities on private lands, funded one-third by the department and two-thirds by individual land owners or industry.

PRIORITY

Launch a Department of Energy to implement Nova Scotia's comprehensive energy strategy. (Energy)

The Nova Scotia Department of Energy was created in June 2002 to serve as the focal point in the development of the Nova Scotia's energy resources, as outlined in the Energy Strategy. The department consolidated the Nova Scotia Petroleum Directorate and the energy-related activities of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, including the Energy Utilization section.

The Department of Energy promotes, supports, coordinates, administers, and gives policy advice on the development of a prosperous, clean, efficient, and sustainable energy sector for the maximum advantage of Nova Scotians. This is being achieved through the following:

- partnerships with Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada
- legislative development and review (Gas Distribution Act, Underground Hydrocarbon Storage Act, Energy Act)
- promotion of local products and services that attract new business
- allocation of $14 million from the Gas Market Development Fund to help individual Nova Scotians, small businesses, and institutions use natural gas
- representing the interests of Nova Scotians before proceedings with the National Energy Board, the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, and the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board on issues that affect energy development, production, and use in Nova Scotia

In May 2002, the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee was formed to make recomendations on how competition can be introduced into Nova Scotia's electricity market and setting renewable energy standards.

In October 2002, Nova Scotia became a founding member of the Atlantic Energy Round Table. This federal-provincial industry partnership is working to improve the regulatory system for offshore oil and gas and to increase the industrial opportunities for development of our resources.

Several other Nova Scotia government departments are also involved in implementing the Energy Strategy: Natural Resources, Environment and Labour, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and Transportation and Public Works.

PRIORITY

Continue the Campaign for Fairness to improve Nova Scotia's share of revenue from the offshore.
(Intergovernmental Affairs)

The Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Accord Review began in summer 2002, as a result of the Campaign for Fairness. Terms of reference were developed for a joint review of the accord and the provisions relating to Crown Share Adjustment payments.

An interdepartmental team, led by Intergovernmental Affairs, developed Nova Scotia's positions and negotiating strategy and has been working with federal counterparts to achieve a shared understanding of the accord and its implementing legislation.

Intergovernmental Affairs continues to research and more precisely articulate Nova Scotia's position, with a view to negotiating regulations to give effect to the Crown Share Adjustment payment entitlement.

Premier Hamm has raised the issue repeatedly with the Prime Minister and other federal ministers and has ensured that key opinion makers are informed regarding progress.

PRIORITY

Implement the Integrated Tourism Plan to continue growth of the Nova Scotia tourism industry in a highly competitive global market and encourage integration of research, product development, marketing, and strategic partnerships.
(Tourism and Culture)

The government worked with the tourism sector to implement the Integrated Tourism Plan in 2002–2003. As a result, Nova Scotia's tourism industry had a record year in 2002, with provincial tourism revenues reaching $1.3 billion. This represented 34,700 jobs, $498 million in payroll, and $96 million in provincial tax revenues. Overall visitation increased by 2 per cent to 2.18 million visitors. North American markets were up, with Canadian visitors up 1 per cent and visitors from the United States up 9 per cent. Total road visitation was level, while air visitation was up 7 per cent. Accommodation room nights sold reached 2.6 million, representing a 3 per cent increase over the previous year.

Tourism and Culture worked with key tourism stakeholders, including the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, industry organizations, and private operators in implementation of the 2002 Tourism Plan.

Highlights included a 2002 print and broadcast consumer advertising campaign; niche marketing activities in partnership with Golf Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Adventure Tourism Association, and Taste of Nova Scotia; a new program targeting motorcycle enthusiasts; and a major promotion in Boston implemented in partnership with Industry Canada, Tourism Atlantic, the Canadian Tourism Commission, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, and Bay Ferries.

Tourism and Culture directed significant efforts at maximizing the tourism potential and economic opportunities associated with <novascotia.com>, Nova Scotia's tourism website. E-marketing campaigns were implemented targeting major markets in the United States and Canada, resulting in an overall increase of visitation to the site of 14 per cent.

The 2002 tourism advertising campaign integrated Nova Scotia's "Canada's Seacoast" brand positioning in broadcast and print advertising in major markets outside Atlantic Canada. These efforts reinforced Nova Scotia's position in US and Canadian markets as a spectacular seacoast touring destination featuring unique natural and cultural attractions.

The Tourism Development Investment Programs were revised during 2002–2003 to better reflect priorities of the joint industry/government 2002 Tourism Product Development Plan. Programs are now application-driven to facilitate enhanced access by tourism stakeholders.

Tourism and Culture worked with industry partners to enhance professionalism and quality service in the sector during 2002–2003. Support was directed at assisting tourism sector participation in best-practice missions in strategic tourism product areas focused on nature and cultural tourism.

PRIORITY

Partner with the federal government and communities to initiate a virtual museum, supporting the province's position as a seacoast tourism destination and to promote educational resources and opportunities for Nova Scotians.
(Tourism and Culture)

The government worked with federal partners and community stakeholders in supporting development and promotion of increased Nova Scotia heritage material available on line. Over 12,000 heritage images were digitized, enabling Nova Scotians and visitors to access heritage resources through the Internet.

A partnership with the Virtual Museum of Canada supported development of major new heritage websites aimed at promoting education and stewardship of Canada's natural heritage. This included on-line material highlighting Canada's

oceans and Nova Scotia's natural environment.

Mi'kmaq heritage and culture was promoted through the launch of Carved in Stone, an on-line multimedia Mi'kmaq thematic resource guide and digitized virtual exhibit on Mi'kmaq petroglyphs.

PRIORITY

Implement new provincial Cultural Industries Strategy, including new culture programs with a greater focus on community cultural development and cultural industries. (Tourism and Culture)

The government worked with leaders in the culture sector to establish a new Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council, whose mandate is to make recommendations to the Government of Nova Scotia on the planning, design, and delivery of arts and culture programs in Nova Scotia. The new partnership is designed to engage culture sector participation in government decision making on culture sector investment priorities.

The government worked with culture stakeholders to develop sector-specific cultural strategies in 2002–2003. This included research and development of a Nova Scotia music sector strategy, an examination of business climate incentives to support both music and publishing, and work with Nova Scotia's craft industry to support trade missions in export markets.

PRIORITY

Work with the Acadian community and private sector to develop and enhance product and market opportunities related to the World Acadian Congress coming to Nova Scotia in 2003–2005. (Tourism and Culture, Acadian Affairs)

Tourism and Culture established an Acadian Liaison Officer position in 2002–2003 to support the 2003–2005 Acadian Celebrations. In partnership with key stakeholders, the department also started development of an Acadian Tourism Strategy to maximize the economic impact of the 2003–2005 celebrations. Acadian events and images were incorporated in 2002 tourism literature including the French and English travel guides, festivals digest, and spring, summer, and fall coupon books.

To support and promote Acadian history and culture, Tourism and Culture developed on-line Acadian information through the Nova Scotia Public Archives and the Nova Scotia Museum. The department completed planning and research into an on-line searchable database of all baptism, marriage, and

burial entries in pre-deportation Roman Catholic parish registers from Annapolis Royal, 1750–52.

In partnership with local stakeholders and the Office of Acadian Affairs, Tourism and Culture announced in 2002–2003 that Le Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse in West Pubnico would become part of the Nova Scotia Museum system. Adopting this site into the provincial system of museums supports efforts to promote the 2003–2005 Acadian Celebrations and enables the provincial museum network to better represent the heritage and cultural diversity of Nova Scotia.

PRIORITY

Build on the foundations for growth in the Nova Scotian information technology sector through the federal-provincial Information Economy Initiative.
(Economic Development)

The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) entered into an agreement with Membertou First Nation for an IT Training and Development Project for Operating Systems Engineers (Microsoft Certification). This multi-partner project will be conducted over the next three years and has a planned sustainability component built into it so that ongoing training and development needs will be met by members of Membertou First Nation for members of Membertou First Nation. Membertou will be using this capacity to build on its portfolio of international corporate collaboration and partnership arrangements.

IEI University-Acadia (AITT) completed its project in March 2003 and will be submitting its final report in fiscal year 2003–2004. The project was completed on time and within budget and exceeded its project targets. Significant investment capability was achieved and has enabled Acadia to pursue national and international contracting opportunities.

PRIORITY

Work with the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC) and the Government of Canada to provide for a continuing coal industry in Cape Breton by addressing the reissuing of coal leases following their surrender by CBDC and remediation and reclamation of CBDC lands.
(Natural Resources)

Negotiations between the department and Natural Resources Canada/Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC) on the conditions necessary for the province to accept the surrender of the CBDC Special Lease (coal) 90-2 continued throughout 2002–2003.

A number of issues were successfully resolved during this time, including the provision of resource information and agreement on a process for assessing the environmental liabilities of sites on CBDC-owned land that were operated by predecessor companies prior to 1967.

PRIORITY

Co-chair the 2002 annual conference of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Agriculture. The conference will advance work on the Agriculture Framework Policy Agreement aimed at developing an integrated approach to agricultural issues.
(Agriculture and Fisheries)

Agriculture and Fisheries chaired the 2002 annual conference of federal-provincial-territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Agriculture.

Ministers signed the Agricultural Policy Framework Agreement, which is aimed at developing an integrated approach to agricultural issues that focuses on the environment, food safety and quality, business risk management, science and innovation, and industry renewal.

Measuring Our Performance

This section provides performance measures related to Nova Scotia's economy and its business climate.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEBT AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP

Outcome: Improved economic climate

What does the measure tell us?

Provincial debt to gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure of the province's sustainability—the higher the ratio, the more onerous the debt burden is for the residents of a province. The measure is one that is commonly used by governments, rating agencies, and the media.

Where are we now?

Given changes to accounting policy in 2002–2003, the net direct debt to GDP ratio for 2001–2002 increased to 46.3 per cent. The 2002–2003 net direct debt to GDP ratio stands at 44.7 per cent.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for the future is to reduce Nova Scotia's net debt to GDP ratio, with the longer-term goal to have Nova Scotia's ratio more in line with the national

average, estimated to be approximately 28 per cent for 2003–2004.

CORPORATE INCOME AND CAPITAL TAX BURDEN

Outcome: Improved economic climate

What does the measure tell us?

This measure indicates the general tax rates applied to business income and to business capital—the two major elements of business investment. This measure looks only at the general rates and does not include special tax incentives and targeted measures. By monitoring these rates, we can ensure that the province remains competitive with other jurisdictions, especially in Atlantic Canada.

Where are we now?

Nova Scotia's rates remain unchanged from those published in 2002.

Where do we want to be?

Given the trend of lowering business tax rates in Canada, we want to ensure that our business tax rates remain competitive with other provinces while maintaining fiscal responsibility. A balanced budget in 2002–2003 and working towards a balanced budget again in 2003–2004 will allow the province to deal with reduced taxation in the future. In addition, the continued review and reduction of targeted measures will allow for reduced overall general rates; for example, the Manufacturing and Processing Investments Tax Credits and the Film Tax Credit are targeted measures. As these credits expire, funds will become available for general rate reduction.

MARGINAL EFFECTIVE PERSONAL TAX RATES

Outcome: Improved economic climate

This measure looks at the marginal effective tax rates in four personal income ranges, commonly referred to as the low, middle, and high brackets and either a high-income surtax or a fourth bracket. It is a good measure of the amount of tax expected to be paid on the next dollar

Atlantic Canada's Business Tax Rates, 2003 *(percent)*

	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	PEI	Nfld and Labrador
General Income Tax	16	13	16	14
Small Business Income Tax	5	3	7.5	5
Large Corporations Tax (Capital Tax)	0.25	0.3	Nil	Nil

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance

earned in that bracket. This measure is not designed to measure the tax burden.

What does the measure tell us?

The measure tells us how much tax an individual can expect to pay on the next dollar of taxable income earned and enables comparisons with other provinces.

Where are we now?

The following table shows the marginal effective rates in Atlantic Canada. It should be noted that as a result of the move to Tax on Net Income, provinces are allowed to individually move income brackets. This has resulted in differing brackets across the country, hindering effective comparability. We have chosen to use the terms Low, Middle, High, and High Plus to distinguish the brackets. Generally, the low bracket is up to about $30,000, the middle bracket up to about $60,000, and the High over $60,000. High Plus refers either to where a high-income surtax starts (based on the amount of basic tax payable, in Nova Scotia's case $10,000 of tax) or to where an additional bracket starts (in New Brunswick's case $100,000 of income).[1]

Where do we want to be?

The government's commitment is to remain competitive with other provinces, particularly in Atlantic Canada. Recent tax reductions in most provinces have caused Nova Scotia to fall behind the rest of the country. Effective January 1, 2004, the Nova Scotia marginal rates will be reduced by approximately 10 per cent in each bracket. This tax reduction will result in Nova Scotia having the lowest marginal rates in Atlantic Canada.

1 A surtax is calculated as a percentage of basic tax in excess of a certain threshold.

Atlantic Canada's Personal Income Tax Rates, 2003 *(percent)*

	Nova Scotia[2]	New Brunswick	PEI	Nfld and Labrador
Low	9.77	9.68	9.8	10.57
Middle	14.95	14.82	18.18	16.16
High	16.67	16.52	18.37	18.02
High plus (includes surtaxes)	18.34	17.84	18.37	18.02

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance

2 In 2003, the province introduced the Nova Scotia Taxpayer Refund (NSTR), a one-time payment of $155 to eligible taxpayers, with an estimated total value of $68 million. This payment cannot be factored into personal marginal rates, but is estimated, in total, to be 10 per cent of personal income taxes paid between July 1 and December 31, 2003.

CREDIT RATING BY MAJOR RATING AGENCIES

Outcome: Sound business climate

What does the measure tell us?

A credit rating is an evaluation of a borrower's ability and willingness to pay interest and to repay principal. Rating firms provide investors with these measures of credit quality of bonds or other financial instruments. A credit rating affects the borrower's debt-servicing costs and the investor's rate of return, since an investor will demand a higher interest rate on a more risky, lower-rated security.

Where are we now?

For 2002–2003, the Dominion Bond Rating Service (DBRS) rating of the Province of Nova Scotia was at BBB (high) with a stable outlook—identical to the baseline established in 2001–2002. On August 26, 2003, the DBRS rating for Nova Scotia was upgraded to A Low with a stable outlook. While this represents a significant improvement, in comparison with other provinces Nova Scotia remains second lowest, with Alberta receiving the highest rating at AA (high) and Newfoundland receiving the lowest at BBB.

Where do we want to be?

With the upgrade to A Low with a stable outlook we have achieved the 2004–2005 target. The province can continue to improve the rating by producing balanced budgets.

WORKING TIME LOST DUE TO STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS

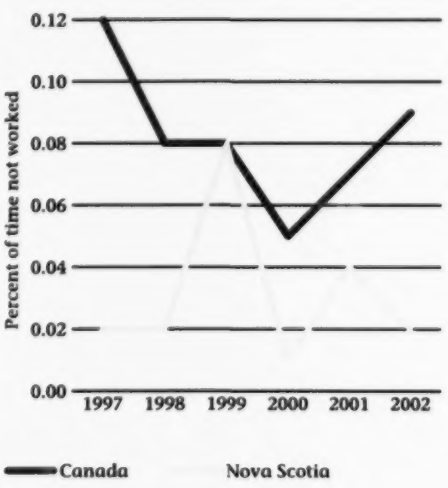
Outcome: Sound business climate

What does the measure tell us?

This measure is one indicator of labour stability, an important factor for economic development. Comparison with national rates helps the government monitor trends, set targets, and determine priorities.

Work Stoppages, 1997–2002

(time not worked as a percentage of working time)



Sources: Human Resource Development Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.

Where are we now?

In recent years, Nova Scotia has shown a high degree of labour stability. Time loss in the economy has been consistently at or below the national average. In 2002, the percentage of working time lost due to strikes and lockouts was 0.02 per cent for Nova Scotia and 0.09 per cent nationally.

Where do we want to be?

Our ongoing target through to 2004–2005 is to remain at or below the national average for percentage of work time lost. This will be accomplished through effective use of the conciliation and mediation processes.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Outcome: Infrastructure that supports economic growth

What does the measure tell us?

Public and private investment per capita measures the value of capital expenditures per person for both new construction and machinery equipment. Information on capital spending provides a useful indicator of infrastructure capacity and market conditions in the economy. The Department of Economic Development started implementation of Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Prosperity, in 2001–2002. The strategy continues to focus on creating the right conditions to help the economy grow, such as making public investments in infrastructure that will, in turn, attract new private investment.

Where are we now?

Information gathered from Statistics Canada publications (Private and Public Investment, 2002 and 2002 Quarterly Population Estimates) indicates that investment per capita was $5,898 in 2002, up from $5,075 in 2000 and $4,631 in 2001. (The 2001 figure included in the 2001–2002 Accountability Report was an estimate; the new number is based on revised population figures.)

Where do we want to be?

We want to continue to increase investment per capita over time. *Opportunities for Prosperity* outlines several action steps to increase both infrastructure capacity and internal investment, such as the following:

- implementing the Infrastructure Canada–Nova Scotia partnership agreement with the federal government and municipal governments, with the priority being water and sewage treatment facilities
- making it easier for Nova Scotians to invest at home through programs such as the Community Economic Development Investment Funds and community bonds

- building on the work of the Information Economy Initiative and other federal/provincial collaborations, using government leverage to ensure that Nova Scotians have high-quality digital connections

INTERNATIONAL ROUGHNESS INDEX

Outcome: Infrastructure that supports economic growth

The condition of our highway system plays a key supporting role in the development of the provincial economy and is measured using an International Roughness Index (IRI). The IRI is a new advanced measure, internationally accepted and comparable across jurisdictions. (Note: This replaces the previous measure, riding comfort index (RCI) of 100-series highways.)

What does the measure tell us?

IRI is measured on a scale of 0–5, where 0 = smoothest and 5 = unacceptable. The level of riding comfort on 100-series routes reflects the contribution of highways to increased economic development by enabling industry to access new resources, facilitating the transport of raw materials and finished goods, and providing mobility for workers and consumers to reach the workplace and marketplace.

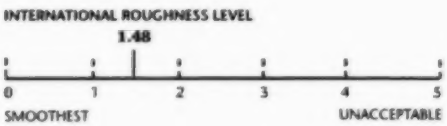
Where are we now?

In 2002, the level of riding comfort for 100-series highways was 1.48. An IRI value of 1.6 or below for 100-series highways is considered good according to the *National IRI Survey—2001.*

(NOTE: In 2000, 7.3 was the average RCI value. In 2001, the average RCI was 7.4. RCI was measured on a scale 0–10, where 0 = unacceptable and 10 = smoothest. Transportation Association of Canada's standard for 100-series highways is an RCI of 5.5 or better.)

International Roughness Index, 2002

1.6 or below considered good



Source: Data produced by Automatic Road Analyser (ARAN), Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works

Where do we want to be?

The Department of Transportation and Public Works will strive to maintain the level of riding comfort on 100-series highways. To achieve this, the department is committing additional resources to repaving and has implemented End

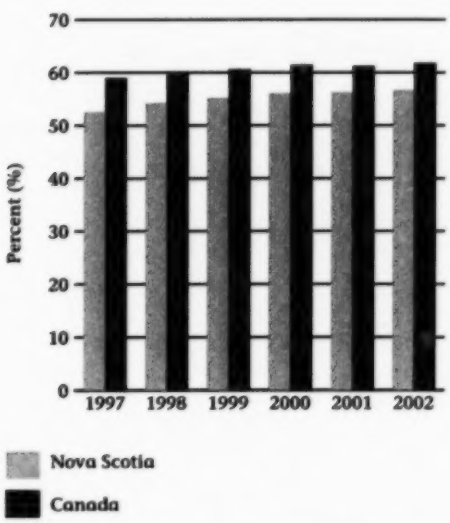
Product Specifications, whereby paving contractors are made responsible for product quality on all suitable paving contracts of 10,000 tons of asphalt or more. The department is continuing to work toward expanding the use of End Product Specifications.

EMPLOYMENT RATE

Outcome: Increased economic activity

Employment Rate

Nova Scotia and Canada



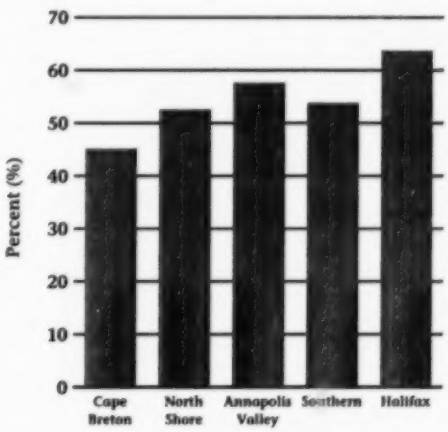
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review 2002.

What does the measure tell us?

The employment rate measures the number of Nova Scotians, 15 years and older, working in full-time and part-time jobs. It fluctuates throughout the year on a fairly predictable seasonal basis, so using an average figure is the best indicator of performance over time.

Employment by Region

2002



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review 2002.

Where are we now?

Nova Scotia's employment rate in 2002 was 56.7 per cent, up from 56.3 per cent in 2001 and 52.6 per cent in 1997. The overall rate for Canada in 2002 was 61.8 per cent, up from 61.2 per cent in 2001 and 59.0 per cent in 1997.

Employment rates vary within the province, with Cape Breton region performing at 45.2 per cent in 2002, while the Halifax region continued to

perform above the provincial and national employment rates, at 63.8 per cent in 2002.

Where do we want to be?

Our aim is to continuously monitor employment rates and implement meaningful strategies that, over time, will help to close the existing gaps.

Families and Communities

The Government of Nova Scotia made some strategic investments in support programs for Nova Scotia families and communities in 2002–2003, to help Nova Scotians feel safe, strong, and self-sufficient.

Recognizing the importance of early childhood development, the government moved forward with a coordinated system of supports for families, including early language and learning programs, special needs child care, training, and expansion of child care centres.

The government helped make communities safer in 2002–2003, by training justice workers to implement the new provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act and responding to the recommendations of the Russell report, which reviewed the Framework For Action Against Family Violence.

Making Nova Scotians safer on the province's roads and highways was a priority in 2002–2003, with more improvements to transportation infrastructure and motor vehicle regulations.

Helping our least fortunate citizens was also a focus on 2002–2003. The government offered an enhanced range of programs for people who receive income assistance, with approximately one-third of these people taking part in employment support services. Low-income Nova Scotians will have access to more affordable housing in coming years, thanks to a five-year federal-provincial agreement that provides funding to create or renovate hundreds of Nova Scotia housing units.

The government met its commitment to provide additional support for municipalities through a revised funding formula, which is designed to give Nova Scotians a comparable level of government service in most communities.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Develop and implement programs under the federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative, which recognizes the importance of investment in the early years for children. The components include stabilization and enhancement of the current childcare system and development of a coordinated system of supports for families, such as early language and learning programs, special needs child care, training, and expansion of childcare centres. (Community Services)

In 2002–2003 Nova Scotia entered into the second year of activities of the five-year federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative. This initiative is directed at enhancing services and programs for children during the first six years to provide a sound foundation for their future well-being.

With the following investments in 2002–2003, Nova Scotia made great progress in improving and expanding early childhood development services:

- approximately $3.6 million to recruit and retain qualified staff for licensed daycare centres
- $1.3 million in grants to help early childhood training institutions create new professional development opportunities
- creation of 329 new full-day spaces and 74 part-day spaces through start-up and expansion grants for new and existing non-profit childcare centres, at a cost of $1.6 million
- an additional 50 subsidized, portable child care spaces to benefit the province's low- and moderate-income families; once assigned these spaces follow the child anywhere in the province, giving the family more flexibility to pursue employment opportunities
- $450,000 to create childcare resource and referral centres, which provide information and support for parents to access books and toy lending in addition to providing parent and caregiver education
- $400,000 for equipment and material for the province's 26 child development centres, which will further enhance delivery of quality licensed child care
- more than $1 million to programs and training initiatives that help children with special needs get access to licensed child care

- more than $550,000 for a community-based early language and learning program to help children who have language challenges

PRIORITY

Complete construction of the secure care facility in Truro; implement a secure care program to help stabilize youth-in-care with severe behavioural problems and help them return to their communities.
(Community Services)

Secure care is a crisis stabilization program for children and youth in the care of the Minister of Community Services. Thorough treatment plans are developed for each resident, to enable these children and youth to return to their community placements as soon as possible.

Construction of the $4-million secure care facility in Truro was largely complete by the spring 2003, although facility problems caused the opening date to be delayed until late 2003.

The Manager and Chief of Clinical Services were put in place in 2002–2003, and Community Services started hiring and training the remaining program staff. Policies and protocol have been developed to clarify the centre's relationship with hospitals and the local medical community; psychiatric and/or psychological services; and food, personal hygiene, and medical suppliers.

PRIORITY

Continue work with the presidents of Children's Aid/Family and Children's Services agencies to review how child welfare services are delivered in Nova Scotia. This will include consideration of a new funding rationale and options for restructuring the current service delivery model.
(Community Services)

Community Services began the review by researching service delivery models in other jurisdictions. A consultant has been hired to provide advice, and a report is expected in early 2004. This review will continue into 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Continue implementation of Nova Scotia's redesigned employment support and income assistance program to help people maximize their own level of self-sufficiency. A range of employment support services is available to all income assistance recipients who are or can be ready for jobs. Services for persons with a disability are provided through the Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (EAPD) Program. There is also assistance with special needs such as work- and training-related expenses, dental, and eyeglasses.
(Community Services)

A total of 10,478 (32 per cent) of the 33,033 individuals in receipt of income assistance participated in Employment Support Services in 2002–2003. Throughout the year, the Department of Community Services continued to refine the range of supports and services available to people in receipt of income assistance.

The department further developed partnerships with agencies involved in employability of Income Assistance recipients, for example:

- the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, which provides financial assistance and loan guarantees to client-based co-operative ventures
- regional development authorities, which work in communities to create jobs and involve people receiving income assistance in community-based projects and strategic planning
- the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Centre, which gives people in receipt of income assistance the tools needed to show how their work, volunteer, and life experiences qualify them for jobs or further training
- the Horizon Achievement Centre, which operates Community Services' sixth work activity centre program—the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Work Activity Program—to assist people who need academic, personal, and work-skill development

Community Services recognizes that people in receipt of income assistance are more likely to participate in programs if they feel included in the services that might assist them. The Inclusion Initiative is an effort to provide staff, community advocates, and recipients of income assistance with input into the development of departmental policy, programs, and tools. A Community Partners Consultation was held as part of this initiative in January 2003.

Participants were able to validate the vision of the initiative and provide direction for future activity.

Focus groups were held with Community Services' staff, clients, and community advocates. These sessions generated information that will be used to develop a client handbook and a series of program policy fact sheets for the Employment Support and Income Assistance Programs.

Phase I of an information technology improvement initiative was completed. This will give program staff access to IT equipment and tools that will help them provide more timely and appropriate employment services to income assistance recipients.

PRIORITY

Implement the government response to the Russell Report on the Framework for Action Against Family Violence, including proclamation of domestic violence legislation. (Justice, Community Services)

The government's response to the Russell Report included several significant activities in 2002–2003. The Framework for Action Against Family Violence was updated to include improved policies and procedures for Policing and Victim Services, Court Services, Correctional Services, and the Public Prosecution Service. A dominant aggressor policy was added, along with risk-assessment tools for use by police, Correctional Services, and Victim Services.

A high-risk case coordination protocol framework was developed by the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service. Further consultation has been taking place with the Department of Community Services to expand the protocol to become a provincial framework to provide structure for regional protocol development.

The government put in place domestic violence coordinator positions, at a cost of $157,500, to help the police assess ongoing risks and promote coordination of high-risk cases.

The Justice Learning Centre was established with a mandate to train justice workers to understand domestic violence and policies and procedures under the Framework for Action Against Family Violence.

Train-the-trainer sessions were held in December 2002 and January 2003, with 70 trainers participating. These trainers subsequently trained all justice workers, including the RCMP and municipal police. Training focused on understanding domestic violence, the Framework for Action Against Family Violence, the Domestic Violence Intervention Act (proclaimed on April 1, 2003), and policies and procedures for justice professionals for responding to

domestic violence.

PRIORITY

Implement a plan to provide programs and services required to comply with the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act, including a comprehensive training program for all justice workers and inter-agency protocols to coordinate services for youth in conflict with the law. (Justice)

The new federal Youth Criminal Justice Act came into effect on April 1, 2003. In preparation for the new act, the Department of Justice developed training materials that included a pocket guide, a manual for trainers, a manual for participants, and an educational video. Seven jurisdictions across Canada reprinted Nova Scotia's pocket guide for their use.

A total of nine train-the-trainer sessions were held throughout Nova Scotia, with 83 participants from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, the RCMP, and all municipal police services. Trainers later held training sessions for approximately 3,000 justice professionals across the province.

Workshops were held for the Public Prosecution Service, RCMP, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, and Dalhousie Legal Aid, along with orientation sessions for related organizations such as the provincial Departments of Health, Community Services, Education, and Natural Resources.

The Departments of Justice and Health collaborated on the delivery of mental health services for sentenced youth, including the provision of treatment arising from intensive rehabilitative custody and supervision orders.

Resources were also provided to facilitate reintegration planning and supervision; and the Restorative Justice program will provide extra-judicial sanctions (alternatives to formal court processes) when appropriate.

PRIORITY

Implement a Road Listing Program (comprising policies and procedures, transportation geographic information system, network management system, and information databases) for improved inventory and management of Nova Scotia road information.
(Transportation and Public Works)

The Road Listing Program was partially implemented as follows: the Geographic Information System Data Warehouse pilot project with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was completed; and the road listing database initiative was continued to prepare road list data for

migration into the Network Management System (NMS), which provides a single data repository for all stakeholders.

Following completion of the ongoing migration of the road listing data into the NMS, the Road Listing Program will be fully implemented.

PRIORITY

Realize a long-standing demand from municipalities for Nova Scotia Power to pay a fairer share of municipal property taxes. Beginning 2002–2003, NSP will pay $26.4 million to the province's 55 municipalities, an increase of over $10.7 million over the previously scheduled 2002–2003 payment.
(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

One of the key roles of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is the ongoing monitoring and review of the viability and overall condition of Nova Scotia municipalities.

A review conducted in 2002 of municipal property taxes paid by Nova Scotia Power (NSPI) resulted in legislative changes to the Nova Scotia Power Privatization Act that increased NSPI's property tax payment by $10.7 million to $26.4 million, with annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

In addition, the formula for the distribution of the grant was changed. Funds are now distributed to municipalities based on the amount of NSPI assessment in each municipality and based on the equalization grant formula. The equalization program promotes the long-term viability of individual communities and municipal government in general in Nova Scotia.

By distributing NSPI taxes based on assessment and the equalization formula, more municipalities benefit, particularly small towns, some of which are facing financial challenges.

The Minister committed to municipalities that under the new formula no municipality will receive less than they received in 2001–2002 for each of the next two years.

A further review of NSPI taxes was conducted in 2003, resulting in legislative changes that increased NSPI's property taxes to $31 million, with annual increases based on the CPI. The review indicated that this level of taxation is comparable to other power utilities in the country.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations continues to work closely with communities experiencing unique problems, to develop viability strategies to meet their particular needs.

PRIORITY

Implement the new Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing program to strengthen the supply of affordable housing for low-income Nova Scotians.
(Community Services)

Nova Scotia signed the Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement in September 2002. It is a $37-million five-year agreement that will provide funding for the creation or renovation of 850–900 affordable housing units.

Under the terms of the agreement, the federal government will provide $18.63 million in funding, which is to be matched by contributions from the province and its housing partners. Under the agreement, the Government of Nova Scotia is working with our housing partners to build more affordable housing for individuals and families. In November 2002, construction began on a 15-unit affordable housing project in Middleton.

To deliver the funding and ensure that it is focused on the housing needs of Nova Scotians, Community Services has developed four housing programs:

- The Home Preservation Program is geared to lower-income homeowners who live in substandard dwellings and cannot afford the repairs necessary to make their homes safer and healthier.
- The New Homeowner Program is targeted to help moderate-income households move from rental accommodations into newly built, modestly priced homes, and it is further targeted to designated urban areas of revitalization (UARs).
- The New Rental Housing Program is designed to provide low- and moderate-income households with rental housing at or below average market rents in the area.
- The Rental Preservation Program is focused on rehabilitating existing rental buildings that house low- to moderate-income households and that require major renovation/regeneration or conversion. The units will be made available at or below average market rents in the area.

PRIORITY

Expand road safety initiatives, including increased regulatory and other activities in the areas of drinking and driving, commercial carrier safety, enhanced safety for vehicle occupants, improved performance of young drivers, and improved mechanical condition of motor vehicles.
(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

The safety of commercial carriers on Nova Scotia roads continued to be a priority in 2002–2003. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations participated in national discussions to ensure a consistent inter-jurisdictional carrier safety fitness rating.

Drafting was started on a new regulation to reflect the national standard on a carrier safety fitness rating. Work was also conducted in the areas of load securement and drivers' hours of service. New federal regulations on the transportation of dangerous goods were adopted as a reference for use in this province.

The Motor Vehicle Inspection Program continues to be monitored, and regulation changes are being considered.

Other areas of study included the following:

- recommendations from the Road Safety Advisory Committee concerning the removal of most seat belt exemptions from the Motor Vehicle Act
- child restraint devices, including booster seats for children aged 6–9
- regulations concerning driver training schools
- driver inattention initiatives of various jurisdictions, which are being monitored and may be considered for adoption by the government
- ignition interlock devices on all vehicles used by drivers previously convicted of an alcohol-related offence
- vehicle impoundment

PRIORITY

Continue to implement the Infrastructure Canada–Nova Scotia Agreement emphasizing "green" infrastructure projects across the province.
(Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government each invest one-third of the cost of a project. Most of the funding is directed to "green" projects designed to promote effective wastewater management and safe drinking water.

In 2002–2003 the Government of Nova Scotia committed $20 million towards 35 projects. This brings the total provincial commitment to $46 million for 94 projects and 72 per cent of the provincial funding for the $195-million, six-year program.

The Government of Nova Scotia also invested just under $70,000 in projects under the Municipal Drinking Water Supply—Planning Assistance Program in 2002–2003. This program assists municipalities in the preparation of planning documents (municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws) that help protect the source water for their municipal drinking water supplies. In 2002–2003, five projects were for groundwater supplies and two for surface water. These activities are consistent with the province's Drinking Water Strategy.

PRIORITY

Continue work on a framework agreement with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada, which will outline the process and procedures of negotiations and identify the substantive issues to be negotiated by the parties.
(Aboriginal Affairs)

In June 2002, an Umbrella Agreement was signed by the Government of Nova Scotia, the Government of Canada, and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. This agreement formalized the key aspects of the relationship among the three parties, including the following:

- Framework Agreement negotiations on treaty and related issues
- restructuring and revitalization of the current Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia–Canada Tripartite Forum
- discussion among the three parties on the nature and extent of consultation between governments and the Mi'kmaq

In addition to signing an Umbrella Agreement, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs conducted the following activities during the fiscal year in preparation for the negotiation process with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada:

- appointment of a chief negotiator for Nova Scotia (a federal negotiator was in place, and as of March 31, 2003, the parties were awaiting the appointment of a Mi'kmaq negotiator to begin discussions)
- establishment of an interdepartmental committee of senior officials on treaty-related and other aboriginal issues to coordinate departmental involvement for negotiations
- internal consultation with provincial government departments to raise awareness of the negotiation initiative and assist in identifying departmental interests

- preliminary cross-jurisdictional research on many aspects of First Nation–government negotiations
- consultations with stakeholder groups to enhance public awareness and understanding of the negotiating process; public understanding is critical to the success of negotiations

PRIORITY

Increase heritage expertise, information, and advisory services to communities. A new function within the Nova Scotia museum system will help communities with research, training, preservation, presentation, and promotion of local heritage. (Tourism and Culture)

The Nova Scotia Museum worked with heritage interests and community museums throughout the province to assist in development and interpretation of heritage artifacts and exhibits. This was accomplished with existing internal resources. Examples include documentation of fossil collections in the Sydney area, provision of expertise and resources at the Whale Interpretation Centre in Pleasant Bay and the Birding Museum in Cape Sable, and development of new heritage exhibits at McCulloch House in Pictou.

PRIORITY

Develop a policy framework aimed at equalizing access to school facilities for purposes other than education, standardizing rates charged, and ensuring that facilities are available for community and youth use for as many hours as possible. Availability varies across the province, in terms of ease of access, rates, and hours of availability. (Education)

A draft policy framework has been developed on the use of school facilities for non-educational purposes. The policy is designed to promote consistency in access to schools by community groups across the province. School boards have been asked to review their present policies and identify changes that would be needed to fit within the framework.

Measuring Our Performance

CRIME RATE

Outcome: Safe and vibrant communities

What does the measure tell us?

The crime rate is a key indicator of social and economic well-being within a society. It indicates how many criminal incidents have been reported to the police for violent, property, drug, and other offences, excluding Criminal Code traffic offences. The number is standardized per 100,000 of the population so that rates can be compared among geographic areas with different populations and over time.

The crime rate is affected by factors including reporting of criminal incidents by the public, level of enforcement by the police, level of police resources, changes in police enforcement practices, and changes in law or government policy.

Where are we now?

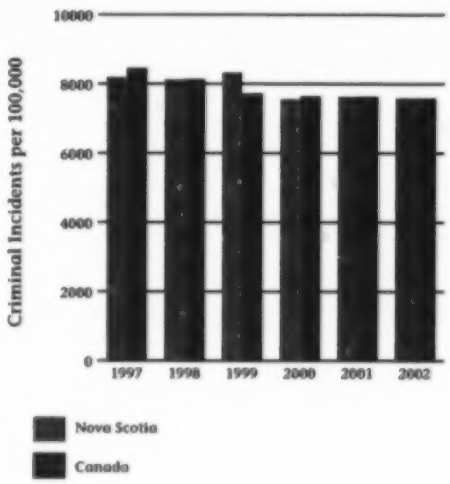
In 2002 in Nova Scotia, there were 7,609 criminal incidents reported per 100,000 population. This figure is almost even with the national average of 7,590 criminal incidents per 100,000 population. As indicated in the graph, the crime rate in Nova Scotia has remained fairly steady over the last three years.

Where do we want to be?

The target for the future is to maintain Nova Scotia's crime rate below the national average.

Overall Crime Rate

1997–2002



Source: Statistics Canada; Policy, Planning & Research, Department of Justice.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD CLAIMS

Outcome: Safe and vibrant communities

A safe working environment is critical to worker occupational health and safety. Government works with employers and employees to promote compliance with a legislative framework that reflects current workplace standards. By creating safe working environments, we minimize workplace hazards and risk. In turn, this reduces the likelihood of accidents resulting in workers' compensation claims.

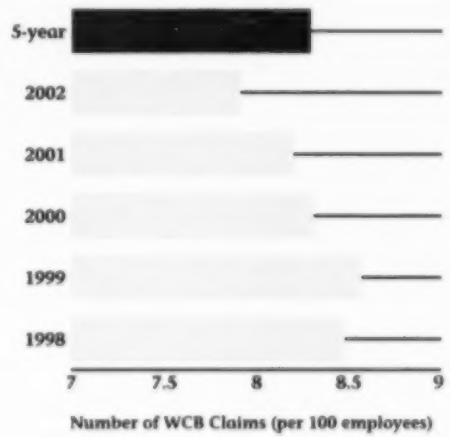
What does the measure tell us?

The average number of registered Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claims per 100 employees is indicative of the number of workplace injuries occurring in workplaces covered under the WCB. The measure allows government to monitor trends, compare them with national averages, and set targets for reductions in accidents. The current year measure is compared to the five-year average because fluctuations occur annually, and only an average can provide an accurate baseline for comparison.

Where are we now?

The rate of claims per 100 employees for 2002 was 7.91. The five-year average (between 1998 and 2002) is 8.29 (see graph below). This represents a trend toward fewer claims over time.

Average Number of Registered WCB Claims



Source: Human Resources Development Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Environment.

Where do we want to be?

Our target through to 2004–2005 is to be at or below the five-year average. This will be accomplished, in part, by working closely with the Workers' Compensation Board to identify high-accident firms and sectors and frequent types of accident.,

and to use this information to target compliance promotion activities and inspections more effectively.

CASUALTY RATES

Outcome: Safe and vibrant communities

What does the measure tell us?

Government tracks casualty rates (fatalities and injuries) per 10,000 motor vehicles registered. Casualty rates are affected by a number of factors—drivers, vehicles, enforcement, education, and engineering programs. The results can be compared across jurisdictions.

The government plays a role through vehicle safety, highway improvement, and driver behaviour initiatives, using the casualty rating as an indicator of whether and how well programs are contributing to improved highway safety. However, a change in the casualty rate may be caused by any one or a combination of the factors listed.

Where are we now?

The recorded casualty (fatality and injury) rate per 10,000 motor vehicles registered in 2000 was 123.9. In 2001, the casualty rate per 10,000 motor vehicles registered declined to 109.39. The rate decreased again, in 2002, to 102.81.

Where do we want to be?

Our objective is to decrease the casualty rate per 10,000 motor vehicles registered. All jurisdictions are working together to achieve national road safety targets. Nova Scotia is identifying, researching, and implementing various engineering features, dimensions, and programs that will improve the safety of our roads (e.g., geometric design changes and traffic control devices).

Casualty Rates 2000–2002

Year	Fatalities	Injuries	Casualties/ 10K Motor Vehicles Registered
2000	87	6,999	123.9
2001	80	6,327	109.39
2002	88	5,949	102.81

Source: Nova Scotia Collision Record Database

INCOME ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS SECURING EMPLOYMENT

Outcome: More self-sufficient families

What does the measure tell us?

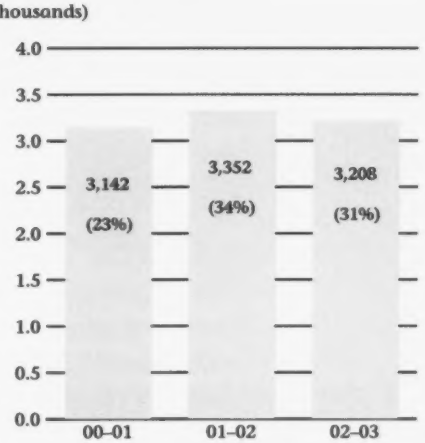
This measure[1] indicates the percentage of individuals in receipt of income assistance who are assessed as being appropriate for involvement in employability activity or approved educational programs who have earnings from full or part-time employment. Earnings either reduce their reliance on income assistance or result in a complete exit from the program. The reported results reflect the number of people who have secured full- or part-time employment and may include those who are still receiving social assistance at a reduced amount.

Where are we now?

A change has been made in the calculation of this measure. Previously, we calculated it based on the total number of income assistance recipients. Now it is calculated based on the specific group of income assistance recipients who are assessed as being appropriate for involvement in employability activity or approved educational programs. The measure for past years has been restated to reflect the calculation change.

During the 2001–2002 base year, 3,352 individuals accessed full- and part-time work. In 2002–2003, there were 3,208 individuals from the specific group assessed as being appropriate for involvement in employability activity or approved educational programs who accessed full- and part-time work. This reflects the likely probability that those who remain in receipt of assistance have significant barriers to employment.

Number and Percentage of Income Assistance Recipients Cases Securing Work



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Employment Support & Income Assistance Division.

NOVA SCOTIA

Where do we want to be?

The Employment Support and Income Assistance Program provides greater support for income assistance recipients making the transition to work. It is anticipated that this support will allow a greater number of people having significant barriers to meet all or part of their income needs through wage earnings. Our 2004–2005 target is a 5 per cent increase over the base year percentage (34 per cent) of income assistance recipients who are assessed as being appropriate for involvement in employability activity or approved educational programs who have secured full- or part-time employment.

1 The wording of this performance measure has been changed. In the 2001–02 *Annual Accountability Report* we stated the measure as "number and percentage of income assistance recipients who have secured full- or part-time employment."

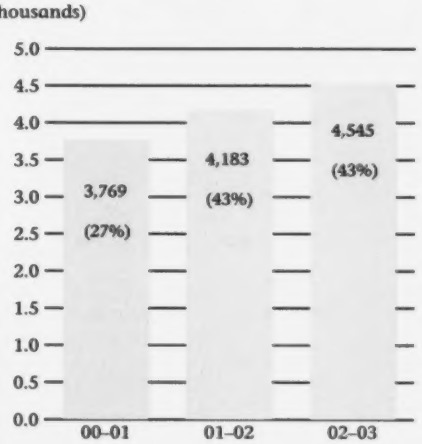
INCOME ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS PARTICIPATING IN UPGRADING AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Outcome: More self-sufficient families

What does the measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of individuals in receipt of income assistance who are assessed as being appropriate to participate in approved educational programs or employability activity who are participating in the educational programs. Many income assistance recipients are involved in efforts to enhance their skills and personal potential. These activities better prepare people for work and to participate as full citizens in their communities. Individuals may enroll in a variety of experiences including literacy and upgrading programs as well as specialized courses assisting people to acquire job-specific skills.

Number and Percentage of Income Assistance Recipients Participating in Upgrading & Training Programs



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Employment Support & Income Assistance Division.

Where are we now?

We revised how this measure is calculated. Previously, it was calculated based on the total number of income assistance recipients. Now, it is calculated based on the specific group of income assistance recipients who are assessed as being appropriate for participation in approved educational programs or employability activity. The measure for past years has been restated to reflect the calculation change. The number of income assistance recipients, who are assessed as being appropriate to participate in approved educational programs or employability activity and who are participating in approved educational programs, increased by 362 to 4,545 in the 2002–2003 fiscal year. The percentage of recipients participating, however, remained at 43 per cent because the total number of recipients assessed as being appropriate for involvement in approved educational programs of employment activity increased by 769 to 10,478.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2004–05 is to maintain the 2001–02 base year percentage (43 per cent) of income assistance recipients who are assessed as being appropriate to participate in approved educational programs or employability activity who are participating in approved educational programs. We recognize that many individuals currently receiving support from the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program need to refresh their existing skills or gain new knowledge in order to successfully enter the labour market.

CHILDREN LIVING IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Outcome: More self-sufficient families

What does the measure tell us?

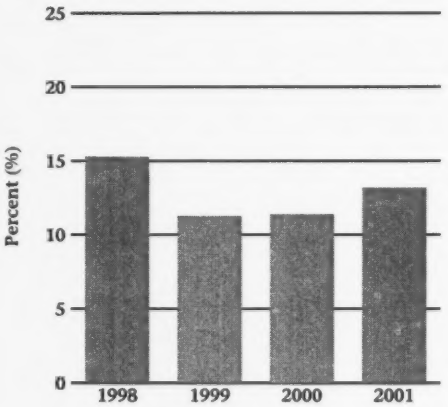
Statistics Canada produces yearly information intended to convey the income level at which a family may experience hardship because it has to spend a greater portion of its income on the basic necessities than does an average family of similar size. This is referred to as the Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs). Specifically, our measure indicates the percentage of children under the age of 18 living in families likely to spend 20 per cent more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family in Nova Scotia. LICO is measured by community rather than on a province-wide basis. This reflects the cost of living of different communities.

Where are we now?

The most recent data available for this measure is for 2001. In preparing the data, Statistics Canada revised the LICO figures for previous years. Therefore for 1998,

1999, 2000 and 2001, respectively, 15.3 per cent, 11.3 per cent, 11.4 per cent and 13.2 per cent of the children under the age of 18 were living in households with incomes after taxes below the Low Income Cut Offs. These figures indicate that there is still work to do to achieve the 2004–2005 target of 11 per cent.

Prevalence of Children in Nova Scotia Under 18 Years of Age Living in Low-Income Households After Taxes



Source: Statistics Canada, Incomes in Canada.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to decrease the rate to 11 per cent by 2004–2005. Previously the target was simply to see a downward trend, but this was revised to a specific percentage in the department's 2003–2004 business plan. Poverty is affected by the overall level of economic activity in the Province in addition to federal/provincial income transfers.

The Environment

The Government of Nova Scotia proceeded with a number of significant programs in 2002–2003 to promote a healthy environment for Nova Scotians.

Managing water resources and improving water management were a priority in 2002–2003. The Government of Nova Scotia's Drinking Water Strategy, released in October 2002, addresses the critical issues of protecting water supply sources, keeping them clean, and ensuring that water is safe to drink. A draft sewage management framework was also prepared following consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

In 2002–2003, government continued implementation of Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy, which recognizes the need for wise use of energy resources and protection of our environment. Government worked to meet national climate change commitments and collaborated with energy producers on plans to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury.

Nova Scotia farms were able to adopt more environmentally sound agriculture practices in 2002–2003, thanks to government support for environmental farm plans, on-farm environmental investment programs, leading-edge agricultural technologies, and research into agricultural water management.

The government also developed new environmental protocols to limit the use of road salt, which is considered harmful to the environment, and developed new designs for energy-efficient provincial buildings.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Implement a new sewage management strategy, which will involve working with municipalities to address current deficiencies in sewage management such as untreated sewage discharges, old and aging sewage-treatment plants, and malfunctioning on-site systems.
(Environment and Labour)

A draft sewage management framework was prepared following consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

Completion of a sewage management strategy has been deferred pending clarification of the federal government

plan for regulatory action on municipal wastewater effluent pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and decision making through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment on development of a Canada-wide management strategy to supplement federal action.

PRIORITY

Complete development of a Water Resource Management strategy and implement a multi-year action plan focusing on clean drinking water, water quality protection, and water quantity assessment.
(Environment and Labour)

The government released *A Drinking Water Strategy* for Nova Scotia in October 2002. The strategy represents the first step of a comprehensive water resource management program.

An interdepartmental steering committee was established to oversee implementation of the strategy and to coordinate water issues across government. The Department of Environment and Labour also established a working group with municipalities to develop and implement solutions to provide safe drinking water.

A major initiative of the Drinking Water Strategy is the standardization of all municipal water system approvals to verify that each approved system is capable of achieving current environmental standards to protect the health of Nova Scotians

Department staff met with all municipal water system owners in December 2002 and January 2003 to explain the municipal water approvals renewal process and provided guidance documents to assist municipalities to complete the process.

All Drinking Water Strategy actions planned for implementation in 2002–2003 were achieved. In addition to those noted above, these include the following:

- communicating with municipalities and other stakeholders to inform them about the Drinking Water Strategy
- starting an assessment of all municipal drinking water supply area protection plans
- undertaking a review of all treatment facility classification requirements
- completing the registration of small public water systems
- introducing a voluntary process for facilities to improve performance and minimize capital expenditures
- developing a "due diligence" handbook for municipal councillors and public utility owners/operators
- implementing standard enforcement and reporting protocols

- developing additional materials to improve public education and awareness.

PRIORITY

Finalize implementation of an integrated food safety program that will focus on the food continuum from production through to the final consumer and address consumer concerns for safety, quality, labelling, and traceability of Nova Scotia seafood and agri-food products.
(Agriculture and Fisheries)

The government progressed on the implementation of an integrated food safety program.

Draft meat inspection regulations were prepared and released for public consultation in 2002–2003. Revisions are being made to incorporate feedback received and to promote a science- and risk-based approach.

Progress was also made in the area of cross-training people who work in the areas of retail food inspection, meat inspection, and retail fish inspection. This has the potential to make inspection both more effective and efficient.

On-farm Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) continues to be a priority area for industry and government. HACCP is a state-of-the-art, industry-accepted inspection system that government and industry are moving toward together. Implementation of HACCP will take both time and training.

Food quality and food safety are a key element in the Agricultural Policy Framework Agreement. The Canada–Nova Scotia implementation agreement identifies initiatives to be undertaken by government and industry to maintain consumer confidence in the safety and quality of our food.

PRIORITY

Work with the agricultural sector to improve its environmental risk management capacity, including water resource management.
(Agriculture and Fisheries)

The Government of Nova Scotia provided more than $1.8 million for projects that support the development or adaptation of leading-edge agricultural technologies as well as research in agricultural water management.

The Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) initiative was enhanced within the Canada–Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement. EFP is a program to conduct on-farm environmental audits, which identify the risks of environmental impacts from farming activities and helps Nova Scotia farmers adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as the construction of wetlands for the treatment of farm wastewater.

The department has directed $500,000 per year for three years, starting in 2002–2003, to accelerate the EFP Initiative. Approximately 260 farmers are now enrolled in the initiative, more than double the 110 farms participating in 2001–2002.

The Farm Investment Fund program provided $1.07 million in support of 275 environmental management projects, which promote environmental stewardship.

PRIORITY

Implement the Nova Scotia Climate Change Strategy and work with the federal government and other provinces on the National Climate Change Action Plan.
(Environment and Labour, Intergovernmental Affairs)

The Government of Nova Scotia participates in the federal-provincial-territorial work on a national climate change plan, with the goal of reducing the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The Department of Energy was assigned the lead for this activity in 2002–2003.

This process emphasizes appropriate, cost-effective mechanisms for monitoring and reporting emission reductions. The approach is to promote reductions in emissions while ensuring that no one jurisdiction or sector bears an unreasonable burden for this national commitment.

Discussions with the federal government involve issues such as targeted measures, emission trading, and covenants for large industrial emitters, as well as partnership opportunities to assist with climate change efforts in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia is also preparing for adaptation to the possible impacts of climate change. Government has worked with the Nova Scotia Environmental Industry Association to coordinate the ClimAdapt network, a group of seven private-sector environmental companies developing exportable expertise on climate change adaptation.

The government amended Environmental Assessment Regulations pertaining to wind energy projects, which encourage the development of clean, renewable sources of energy. Further amendments are planned to promote the use of clean fuels such as natural gas.

PRIORITY

Develop mechanisms to implement air emission reductions for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and mercury, in accordance with Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy.
(Natural Resources, Environment and Labour)

Proposed amendments to the Air Quality Regulations were developed in 2002–2003 and will be released for public review in 2003–2004.

A Memorandum of Understanding is currently under development between the Department of Environment and Labour and Nova Scotia Power Inc. to promote the efficient resolution of air emission reduction issues.

PRIORITY

Adjust the provincial road salting program to address concerns raised by the federal government's review of the use of road salts and their effect on the environment. Actions will include continuing construction of new storage facilities to increase storage capacity by an additional 10 per cent; expanding the use of Road Weather Information Systems and advance forecasting by at least 40 per cent by December 2002; doubling the number of department units equipped to use pre-wet salt and sand/salt mixtures by December 2002; and implementing new winter service levels with consistent criteria on a province-wide basis by winter 2002–2003.
(Transportation and Public Works)

The Government of Nova Scotia responded in 2002–2003 to concerns about the use of road salts and their effect on the environment. Environment Canada has designated salt under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) as a toxic substance harmful to the environment.

Transportation and Public Works started development of a Salt Management Plan, which is expected to be finalized in

2003–2004. The plan will include an inventory of current practices, their effectiveness, and actions to address deficiencies.

Tenders were called for the construction of four new salt storage facilities. One was awarded; the other three were not awarded due to high prices, and they are to be retendered in 2003.

The Road Weather Information System was expanded by approximately 40 per cent, going from 13 sites to 18 sites. The department continued to expand the number of snow and ice control trucks equipped with pre-wetting capabilities. In 2003, the number of units equipped to pre-wet salt was increased from 12 to 25.

Winter maintenance standards were implemented across the province.

PRIORITY

Reduce energy requirements, by installing new and efficient architectural, mechanical, and electrical systems in government buildings, in support of a "Green Building" policy.
(Transportation and Public Works)

A Green Building Policy is the adoption of energy-efficiency standards and sustainable development principles in the design of provincial buildings.

Eight new buildings (six schools, a correctional facility, and a secure treatment facility) were designed to the minimum energy-efficiency requirements of the Model National Energy Code for Buildings and the "Commercial Building Incentive Program". Three of the projects were completed and occupied and the remaining five are under construction.

Energy-efficient upgrades were incorporated into renovations wherever possible. For example, an upgrade of the ventilation system at the Nova Scotia Community College in Truro included the replacement of the existing lighting system with a new, more-efficient lighting system.

PRIORITY

Implement new and updated forest management policies; as part of government's management of Crown lands, begin work on Long Range Management.
(Natural Resources)

The Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations, under the Forests Act, became effective in January 2002. During 2002–2003, considerable effort was invested in explaining the new regulations to stakeholders and educating industry about acceptable practices.

The first component of the Code of Forest Practice, the framework document, was prepared and reviewed by the Forest Technical Advisory Committee. Once approved and implemented, the code will

be mandatory on Crown land and will define principles for planning and conducting sustainable forest management operations in Nova Scotia.

During 2002–2003, the Department of Natural Resources started a Long Range Management Framework (LRMF) pilot project in the Mulgrave Plateau eco-district in Guysborough and Antigonish Counties. An LRMF is an ecologically based land-use planning document.

Also, guidelines for LMRFs were developed and published, outlining the following:

- LRMF development, decision making, and approval processes
- the role of LRMFs in Integrated Resource Management planning
- the required components for setting management targets for Crown land in the eco-districts

PRIORITY

Work with the Joint Action Group to clean up Muggah Creek and negotiate with the Government of Canada to extend the current funding agreement to cover the final phase of the project.
(Sydney Tar Ponds Agency)

Work with the community's public participation process, the Joint Action Group (JAG), is being finalized. The receipt of a formal recommendation for the future remediation of the tar ponds and coke ovens sites was expected in May 2004. Upon receipt of the recommendation from JAG, the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia will conduct a detailed technical review of the clean-up options. This review will include confirmation of cost estimates, risk assessment, social and economic benefits, future site use, environmental assessment, future community engagement, etc.

Upon completion of this review, each level of government will consider funding requirements for the remediation project and negotiations on a new cost share agreement will commence.

PRIORITY

Improve awareness and understanding of the requirements of Nova Scotia's occupational health and safety legislation through more effective communications.
(Environment and Labour)

A communications strategy to improve awareness of occupational health and safety requirements in Nova Scotia was completed in March 2003.

It was modified to reflect the transfer of education and promotion programming to the Workers Compensation Board, in accordance with the government's response to the Dorsey Report on the

Workers' Compensation Act. The communication strategy was provided to the Workers Compensation Board to support future initiatives undertaken to strengthen communications about occupational health and safety. The strategy was due to be implemented in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Better coordinate the activities of hazardous materials response units across government to provide cost-effective emergency response services in all areas of Nova Scotia.
(Environment and Labour)

The Department of Environment and Labour and the Emergency Measures Organization developed a plan to provide continuing governance of hazardous materials response services. This resulted in the establishment of a province-wide task team representing Halifax, Sydney, Truro, Valley Region, Yarmouth, and Amherst with the capacity to provide a trained and equipped hazardous response team to 85 per cent of the province within 1 1/2 hours.

The province's capacity to respond to bio-terrorism and hazardous materials incidents was improved through the purchase of additional equipment.

PRIORITY

Chair the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) in 2002–2003 and contribute to federal-provincial plans for a national forest strategy and a national forest information systems. (Natural Resources)

Nova Scotia was the host province and Chair of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) during 2002. Nova Scotia hosted the annual meeting of Deputy Ministers in June 2002, followed by the annual meeting of Ministers in September 2002.

Department staff participated in most CCFM national work groups during the year. The CCFM made progress on the development of a new National Forest Strategy. The Department of Natural Resources submitted reports on progress achieved under the previous strategy.

The department also took part in both the regional and the national stakeholder consultation processes in preparation for the National Forest Congress that was scheduled for May 2003. Development of the CCFM National Forest Information System continued, and the Nova Scotia node of the Internet network was installed during the year.

Measuring Our Performance

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

Outcome: Healthy environment

What does the measure tell us?

Fifty-four per cent of Nova Scotians get their drinking water from municipal water supplies. Health Canada, together with provincial health and environment ministries, has established the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. This document specifies the health-based criteria for a number of parameters, including bacteria content. Government tracks the proportion of people serviced by municipal water supplies who have access to drinking water that meets the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. This measure helps to provide an overall picture of access to quality drinking water. It also helps to gauge the effectiveness of the recently introduced *Guidelines for Monitoring Public Drinking Water Supplies* and amendments made to the Water and Wastewater Facility Regulations in October 2000.

Where are we now?

In October 2000 the Department of Environment and Labour established a boil-water advisory database to provide an improved tracking system for municipal water quality based on the health-based criteria for coliform bacteria (from the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*). This data collection and reporting system provides a more accurate assessment of water quality from municipal supplies, compared with the system in place for the calculation of this measure in previous years. Recalculated 2001 data show that 96.5 per cent of the population served by municipal water supplies received water meeting the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality at all times during the calendar year. Data for 2002 show no change, although improved operational data collection and improved reporting systems at all levels may have led to improved accuracy of the reported value.

Where do we want to be?

Our target for 2004–2005 is to maximize the percentage of the population served by municipal water supplies that meet the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. This target will be achieved by implementing the drinking water strategy, supporting development of municipal water supply protection plans, and enforcing the Water and Wastewater Facility Regulations, including the

Guidelines for Monitoring Public Water Supplies.

SULPHUR DIOXIDE AIR EMISSIONS

Outcome: Healthy environment

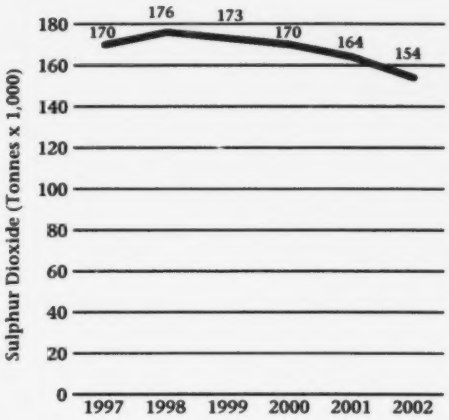
What does the measure tell us?

Clean air is an essential component of a healthy environment, as well as human health. Government works to reduce air contaminants affecting Nova Scotia's air quality. The quantity of sulphur dioxide (SO_2) emitted is a major determining factor for clean air. As a fine particulate matter, SO_2 is a prevalent and harmful air contaminant. It is the main contributor to acid rain and can have significant impacts on human health. Government has established a realistic and measurable target for the reduction of SO_2.

Where are we now?

The Air Quality Regulations have established a provincial SO_2 emission cap of 189,000 tonnes per year. By working closely with industry, SO_2 emissions have decreased considerably over the past four years (see graph). In 2002, approximately 154,000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide were emitted in the province, primarily through major industrial sources. This represents a steady decline in emissions from the base-year measure of 170,000 tonnes in 2000.

Nova Scotia
Sulphur Dioxide Emissions



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.

Where do we want to be?

Government plans to reduce the legislated SO_2 emission cap to 142 000 tonnes per year by 2005. This will be accomplished by working with major industries and establishing a requirement to reduce SO_2 emissions through the use of lower-sulphur fuels. Because industry is not required to meet targeted reductions until 2005, there may be some fluctuation in levels prior to 2005.

SOLID WASTE DIVERSION

Outcome: Healthy environment

What does the measure tell us?

Communities share responsibility for environmental management through efforts such as managing solid waste responsibly. Nova Scotia is working actively to ensure community participation in recycling, composting, and other waste-management initiatives. A solid waste diversion goal (amount of waste diverted from landfills by composting, recycling, etc.) of 50 per cent was established by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and agreed upon by all provinces. Nova Scotia was the first province to reach an overall solid waste diversion rate of 50 per cent per capita. Although the province as a whole has reached this goal, the diversion rate fluctuates from year to year in each of the seven Solid Waste Regions. This measure tells us how many regions are meeting the challenges set out by this progressive target. It also tells us what proportion of the population lives in regions that are meeting this goal.

Where are we now?

In the fiscal year 2002–2003, two of the seven solid waste management regions reached a diversion rate of 50 per cent or more. This represents approximately 49 per cent of the population in the province.

Where do we want to be?

Government is working to promote achievement of a 50 per cent solid waste diversion rate by each of the seven solid waste regions by 2004–2005. There are many challenges to achieving this target. An effective method of dealing with construction and demolition debris is one challenge; expanding composting access to all urban areas is another. Government will support this goal through continued education and enforcement of the Solid Waste-Resource Management Regulations.

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLANS

Outcome: A sustainable environment

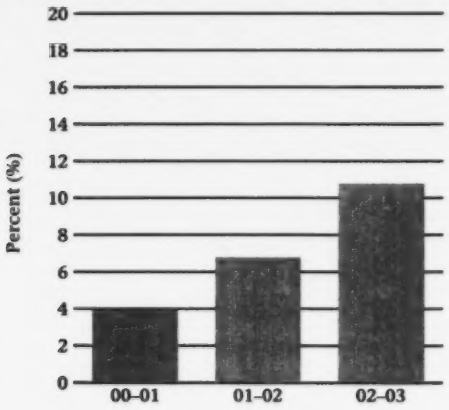
What does the measure tell us?

This measure tells us the number of farmers with environmental farm plans (EFPs) in place, expressed as a percentage of all registered farmers under the Nova Scotia Farm Registration Act. Increasing the number of farms with environmental farm plans will result in conservation and sustainable development of soil, water, air, and biodiversity resources.

Where are we now?

As of March 2003, approximately 260 farms had completed, had an initial visit, or had been contacted with respect to the Environmental Farm Plan initiative. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of participants in the EFP as shown below.

Percentage of Registered Farms with Environmental Farm Plans



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is 20 per cent by 2004–2005. Environment is one of the five pillars within the new Agricultural Framework Agreement (APF). The Accelerated Environmental Farm Planning Initiative, a component of the APF, should help us exceed our projected target.

LONG-RANGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS ON CROWN LAND

Outcome: A sustainable environment

Just over one quarter of the province is comprised of provincial Crown lands. One key responsibility of the government is to manage this land wisely. Long-range management frameworks (LRMF) are being developed for all provincial Crown lands administered by the Department of Natural Resources, (Natural Resources is the department that administers most of the province's Crown lands.)

What does the measure tell us?

Long-range management frameworks are being developed to provide a framework for Crown land management and land-use decisions. These frameworks will provide a database of information and features for the area included within the plan and for the longer-term objectives and goals for the planning area. The frameworks will recognize and consider the special land-use features and values and the various interests in the use of Crown lands. These LRMFs will be important tools to help guide and support sound decision making related to the use and management of Crown lands. The measure provides a clear indication of progress in getting these frameworks in place.

Where are we now?

The province is categorized into 39 eco-districts. No LRMFs were in place as of March 31, 2003. During 2002–2003 the Department of Natural Resources started work on an LRMF for the Mulgrave Plateau eco-district. This LRMF will be used as a model for the preparation of subsequent frameworks for other eco-districts.

Where do we want to be?

Eventually each of the province's 39 eco-districts will be covered by an LRMF. The department identified a target of 50 per cent of Crown land with LRMFs in place by the end of 2004–2005. It appears that this target was overly ambitious, and we will not reach our target for 2004–2005. With our current schedule, we expect that it will take five to seven years for the department to have the initial long-range management frameworks in place for all eco-districts. After the initial frameworks are in place, they will be subject to regular reviews.

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES RECOVERY PLANS

Outcome: A sustainable environment

The province is committed to the conservation and protection of species at risk, provincially and nationally, through the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act and the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk.

What does the measure tell us?

The measure is a straightforward indication of how much work is being done on restoring the health of endangered and threatened species. Recovery plans, which are the focal instrument for addressing the recovery needs for species at risk and guide governments, recovery teams, and others in their conservation efforts, are now being prepared as required under the Endangered Species Act. Recovery plans establish, for each endangered and threatened species, what needs to be done, how much it will cost, when it will be done, and who will do the work. The plans also set goals for what is required to "down-list" a species at risk and establish a strategy for attaining these goals. (To "down-list" a species means to move it to a lower risk category, such as from endangered to threatened.)

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2003, there were 15 species listed as endangered or threatened under our Endangered Species Act. Of the three species that were listed in October 2002, the department is required to complete recovery plans before October 2003 for endangered species and October 2004 for threatened species. For the other

12 species, recovery plans were in place for 11 of them, or 92 per cent, as of March 31, 2003.

Where do we want to be?

Our target is to have recovery plans in place for all (100 per cent) species listed under the Act by 2004–2005 or sooner. We also plan to have these recovery plans in place for each endangered species within one year after the species was first listed as being endangered, and two years for those species listed as being threatened.

SILVICULTURE ON PRIVATE AND INDUSTRIAL LANDS

Outcome: A sustainable environment

Wood supply sustainability can be managed effectively through an aggressive silviculture program. The government monitors wood harvesting and forecasts long-term wood supply by incorporating both harvesting and silviculture data into the forecast. During the last 5 to 10 years, much pressure has been placed on private woodlots to support the provincial demand for wood. Maintaining an adequate level of silviculture will provide for a future supply of wood on private woodlots.

What does the measure tell us?

The measure tells us whether the level of silviculture activity being carried out, compared to the required amount, is sufficient to balance forest harvesting on private and industrial lands. The regulations that require silviculture were introduced in 1999 and were phased in over a three-year period, with the phase-in period ending in 2001.

Where are we now?

During 2002, 14.1 million silviculture credits were required, and 18.2 million credits were claimed. As a result, completed silviculture was 130 per cent of the required amount. Comparable figures for 2001 and 2000 were 134 per cent and 214 per cent respectively.

Where do we want to be?

The department's target for this measure for both 2004 and 2005 is 100 per cent or greater (this measure is calculated on a calendar year basis).

Government Services

The Government of Nova Scotia continued to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs and services in 2002–2003, with good management and a professional public service as a planning theme.

Nova Scotians had access to enhanced on-line services such as motor vehicle registration, land tenure, and property assessment, and the Nova Scotia Business Registry expanded services that reduce red tape for businesses.

To ensure that competent staff are in place to deliver services Nova Scotians rely on, government worked to improve human resource policies and practices. The Public Service Commission moved forward with implementation of its new mandate and developed strategies that will be used in future years to attract and keep good employees in a competitive labour market.

A performance-based compensation system for management employees was introduced in 2002–2003, tying pay increases to merit as measured by employee performance appraisals. Government also made progress on major projects to update compensation systems for both bargaining unit and management employees.

In 2002–2003, government continued to strengthen its planning, budgeting, evaluation, and accountability processes to ensure that expected program and service results are defined, resources are provided to achieve expected results, and results are fully reported.

Priorities 2002–2003

PRIORITY

Begin the first phase of the Community Services client service delivery initiative, to develop ways of improving service to clients and improving efficiency for staff through more effective business processes and technology. (Community Services)

The overall goal of the Client Service Delivery Initiative (CSDI) is to modernize the way in which Community Services delivers its programs and services so that the department can provide better service to its clients and a better work environment for staff.

In 2002–2003 Community Services planned to develop an information

management strategy including an information matrix and information policy framework and to engage a partner to help implement the Client Service Delivery Initiative. However, owing to competing priorities within Community Services' budget, the Client Service Delivery Initiatives were not advanced.

Community Services recognizes that the department needs to improve the way it operates and delivers services to its clients, including new work processes and computer systems. It continues to be committed to making these types of incremental quality improvements. Process improvements pursued in 2002–2003 include the following:

- improvements in the Employment Support Program's income and asset testing process
- development of Phase I and II of the Early Childhood Development Services IT Information System for the childcare subsidy application, supported childcare applications, and associated claim payment processes
- a reporting tool for the Community Supports for Adults Program that will provide both case workers and management with better program information
- new property management and personnel/payroll systems for Housing Services

Community Services is also investigating an integrated case management system to be implemented across the department's program areas.

PRIORITY

Continue e-government initiatives, including enhancements to Nova Scotia Business Registry and Registry of Motor Vehicles applications, an electronic land tenure system in Colchester County, and public on-line access to property assessment information. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations continued to develop a variety of e-government initiatives in 2002–2003. Technical work was undertaken to improve and expand electronic services at the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics, and the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR).

The department pursued opportunities in 2002–2003 to provide services on behalf of other provincial departments through NSBR. The Nova Scotia Business Registry added service delivery on behalf of the Public Safety (Fuel Safety) division of the Department of Environment and Labour. An estimated 32 per cent of Nova Scotians were able to meet their business licensing requirements through NSBR in that year.

Considerable work was completed on business technology planning to ensure that government investments in technology are integrated and meet the highest-priority business needs.

The department worked on a Passport Office E-Links connection to Vital Statistics.

In March 2003, the new land registration system was implemented in Colchester County. The Land Registration Act (LRA), which had been passed in June 2001, was amended in spring 2002 to incorporate many suggestions received from stakeholders. Regulations, forms, policies, and procedures were prepared in consultation with system users, such as lawyers, realtors, bankers, title searchers, surveyors, development officers, and staff, to ensure that the business processes would be as efficient and effective as possible.

Since 2001, Nova Scotia property owners have been able to get information on line to help them determine if their property assessment is reasonable in relation to others in their area. A pilot was conducted in 2002–2003 on a website that will give municipalities easy access to assessment information and allows for electronic information exchange.

PRIORITY

Coordinate with national and international jurisdictions to improve security of the data stored on provincial registration systems and related to the authorization of certification documents. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

The Government of Nova Scotia participated in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Identity in Canada, which published a policy framework in November 2002 to govern identity policy and related operational processes. The goals of the framework are to protect the public from identity theft and identity fraud and to facilitate quality service.

Work on authentication and security in 2002–2003 involved collaboration with inter-jurisdictional bodies that deal with particular identity documents, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), to improve standardization of drivers' licences and the processes for issuing them.

In response to recommendations of the Vital Statistics Council for Canada (VSCC), legislative and policy changes went into effect in February 2002 to increase security around the issuance of birth certificates.

A number of other enhancements to address concerns raised by the identity council's security committee were carried out. Of 17 recommendations made by the committee, Nova Scotia had implemented 13 either fully or partially by April 2003.

PRIORITY

Complete the review of agencies, boards, and commissions to clarify responsibilities and mandates of existing agencies and develop adequate accountability provisions.
(Treasury and Policy Board)

Research work was undertaken in 2002–2003 as part of the review of agencies, boards, and commissions led by Treasury and Policy Board. A report is expected to be completed in 2003–2004.

The review work included an analysis of the mandates and responsibilities of agencies, boards, and commissions and an appropriate system of definition and classification. It also covered selection and appointment protocols, remuneration of appointees, and accountability.

The research was used to support specific work on adjudicative agencies, boards, and commissions in 2002–2003. This was part of the settlement agreement with Professor Archibald Kaiser, in relation to a complaint made at the Human Rights Commission.

To ensure that qualified candidates are appointed to quasi-judicial boards, government adopted advisory committees for adjudicative agencies, boards, and commissions, along with terms of reference, development and publication of position profiles, and a model for recruitment that is consistent with fair hiring principles. The new process was in use by early 2003, and an evaluation is scheduled for early 2004.

PRIORITY

Introduce the SAP finance, procurement, and business warehouse modules—a management information tool—in the public sector, including school boards and municipalities.
(Finance, with departments)

On April 1, 2003, the SAP Project Office was created at the Office of Economic Development to facilitate roll-out of SAP systems across the sectors in conjunction with host departments and the Department of Finance.

The pace is being managed in accordance with resources available; however, much progress has been made already. Seven municipalities have rolled out SAP corporate systems (Finance, Procurement, and Materials Management). One municipality has completed the HR Payroll implementation as well. Further

roll-outs of corporate systems and operational systems (tax and water billings) will be completed in phases by September 2005.

The framework for the SAP-HR/Payroll project, named E-Merge, was developed in 2002–2003. The project involves converting government departments and seven school boards to a common human resource and payroll system to replace the current technical platform known as HRMS. The project was scheduled to take place between May 2003 and November 2004.

Regional housing authorities adopted a standard SAP-HR system effective January 2003, and the initial assessment for implementation of SAP corporate systems in the district health authorities was completed in December 2002.

PRIORITY

Implement a private-sector management contract for operation of Nova Scotia's Signature Resorts.
(Tourism and Culture)

Nova Scotia entered into a 10-year contract with New Castle Hotels in 2002–2003 to operate the province's three Signature Resorts—Keltic Lodge in Ingonish Beach, The Pines Resort in Digby, and Liscombe Lodge in Liscomb Mills. New Castle Hotels has a proven track record in managing four-star resorts; and an aggressive strategy was launched to improve quality, increase sales, and provide staff with more opportunities. The company, based in Shelton, Conn., operates 23 properties.

PRIORITY

Continue the Management Compensation Project, including an examination of both the job evaluation (classification) and pay component of the management compensation system, targeted for completion in fiscal year 2003–2004.
(Public Service Commission)

The Public Service Commission completed the first phase of the Management Compensation Project in 2002–2003. The project is designed to replace the current management compensation system, which is 20 years old and no longer considered effective in determining the internal value of management jobs.

Hay Management Consultants were retained to provide professional advice, and the project was advised by a steering committee with broad representation from line management, the human resources community, and the Public Service Commission. The HR community received

training on the new method of evaluating civil service management jobs.

A Quality Assurance Panel was formed, representing a diverse cross-section of managers from across government. Following training in the new approach to job evaluation, they evaluated and ranked 83 management jobs to serve as benchmarks. These will be used as comparators to evaluate the remaining management jobs.

The project is scheduled for completion in 2004–2005.

PRIORITY

Continue the Bargaining Unit Classification Project, a review of all civil service bargaining unit positions.
(Public Service Commission)

The Bargaining Unit Classification Project completed most remaining job evaluation activity in 2002–2003 and prepared to release the draft evaluation results to bargaining unit staff some time in 2003.

Between April 2002 and January 2003, some 1,500 job fact sheets were evaluated by the Joint Union/Management Job Evaluation Committee. Approximately 2,600 fact sheets were received by January 1, 2003, and were evaluated by March 31, 2003. The first 250 fact sheets were also re-evaluated to ensure consistency with subsequent evaluations.

The Joint Steering Committee also developed recommendations on a new classification structure to categorize the jobs more effectively. Planning for the dissemination of results started in spring 2003.

PRIORITY

Further develop the Executive Career Assignments Program (ECAP), a provincial public service management development program designed to give participants experience to assume higher-level positions.
(Public Service Commission)

The Executive Career Assignments Program (ECAP) was developed and implemented in 2002–2003. This pilot project was aimed at enhancing the skills and abilities of senior government leaders.

The program includes learning and development tools to improve leadership skills, along with job experience opportunities to help participants expand their understanding of core government functions. Job assignments typically last 12–24 months.

The ECAP Program has been replaced by the Career Assignment Program (CAP). This is a joint program of the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia to develop public service leaders for the future. Three CAP seats were made available in 2002–2003 and

were filled through a rigorous assessment and eligibility process.

Both programs are intended to enhance the leadership pool in the public service and assist with succession management. Further career assignments/developmental assignment programs will be designed to meet the needs of managers.

PRIORITY

Streamline the government hiring system to significantly reduce the current average time to fill a position.
(Public Service Commission, with departments)

The Public Service Commission developed a streamlined staffing process in 2002–2003. By March 2003, Community Services, Health, and the Finance CSU were participants in streamlined staffing, and other departments were expected to participate in the following fiscal year.

The new process means that departments receive and evaluate their own employment applications and select candidates to be hired. Hiring decisions are made by those who know the work best, and pilot departments reported a 14-day decrease, on average, in the number of days needed to fill a position.

The PSC, meanwhile, sets the policy framework for hiring and supports the staffing function by providing training, posting vacancies, and giving final authority for position control.

The Public Service Commission also maintains the Employment Opportunities Bulletin, which lists vacancies for all (non-casual) civil servants and corrections positions. Departments forward their postings directly to the Government Employment Opportunities System (GEOS).

A recruitment/selection training session has been added to the Frontline Leadership Development Program.

PRIORITY

Launch a new training program to provide diversity management skills to managers.
(Public Service Commission)

The Public Service Commission developed the Diversity for Leaders program in 2001–2002 to help leaders and managers understand their role in diversity support throughout government.

This course builds on the knowledge and understanding participants get by taking the Diversity and Employment Equity Education program.

In 2002–2003, there were 22 participants in Diversity for Leaders. This program continues to be offered through the Public Service Commission's course calendar for 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Plan and support initiatives to develop a high-quality leadership cadre in the public service, including promotion of public-sector values and performance contracts for senior officials. (Public Service Commission, Treasury and Policy Board)

Frontline manager, middle manager, and individual contributor leadership development programs were held throughout the fiscal year. The Public Service Commission provided this intensive professional development program, involving approximately 15 days training, to 347 employees in 2002–2003. Most of these programs include training in public-sector values and ethics.

The Public Service Commission also offered a full training calendar of "soft skills" and computer training programs for employees across government. In 2002–2003, 1,695 employees attended this training.

The PSC started development of a new Manager's Orientation Program for both current and new managers, as a complement to the Leadership Development programs. All managers will eventually attend the orientation to assist them with their management responsibilities.

Selection and recruitment of employees is conducted in accordance with the Fair Hiring Policy.

The Pay for Performance for Senior Officials policy was implemented in 2002–2003. Each deputy minister is rated annually for their performance at the corporate, departmental, and individual level.

PRIORITY

Develop a corporate communications plan and support the improvement of internal communications across government. (Communications Nova Scotia, Treasury and Policy Board, with departments)

Communications Nova Scotia, with a centralized structure adopted in 2001–2002, was positioned to support a more coordinated approach to communications across government in 2002–2003.

CNS worked with the Office of the Premier, Treasury and Policy Board, and the Department of Finance to develop communications plans on key government initiatives such as the budget, major legislation, and significant policy initiatives. CNS managing directors also monitored and advised on communications activities at the department level.

The Office of the Premier prepared an annual corporate communications plan to guide communications activities, strategies, and central messages in 2002–2003. The goal was to promote understanding of the government's agenda, both among government workers and Nova Scotians at large.

Internal communications planning and activities continued to improve at the department level in 2002–2003. However, plans for a corporate response on internal communications were deferred until 2003–2004, due to resource limitations and other priorities.

PRIORITY

Appoint a new Ombudsman
(Office of the Ombudsman)

Plans to recruit a new Ombudsman were delayed in 2002–2003. Selection of a new Ombudsman was expected to be made in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Continue ongoing implementation of the accountability framework, including annual accountability reporting for more entities.
(Treasury and Policy Board)

Treasury and Policy Board launched a project in 2002 to define and explain government's accountability framework, which encompasses the various policies and practices that promote financial and general accountability in Government of Nova Scotia operations.

The framework articulates the link between individual performance, as outlined in performance plans, and the goals and activities of each operational division, department, and government as a whole. This project is scheduled for completion in 2003–2004.

Treasury and Policy Board continued to be the lead agency in preparing the Government Accountability Report, which describes government progress and accomplishments relative to the priorities and goals set out in the previous year's government's business plan. The Government Accountability Report was published in December 2002 and can be found on the Treasury and Policy Board website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/pub2001/Accountability0102.pdf>.

Treasury and Policy Board also acted as the lead agency in coordinating the publication of individual accountability reports for departments, public service agencies, and Crown corporations. These reports describe accomplishments by departments and agencies relative to their individual business plans for 2001–2002 and can be found on department and agency websites. The list of entities required to produce reports in 2002–2003 did not change from the previous year.

PRIORITY

Research and promote best practices on delivery of government services.
(Treasury and Policy Board)

Treasury and Policy Board staff routinely do best-practice research as part of policy analysis and project management. This involves comparing Nova Scotia's processes, policies, and legislation with other jurisdictions, in Canada, the United States, and sometimes internationally to ensure that the province adopts the best and most effective practices.

Such research formed part of the work on the following:

- budget and business planning
- accounting practices
- evaluation and performance measures
- corporate and internal communication
- agencies, boards, and commissions
- red tape reduction
- specific legislation and regulations

PRIORITY

Continue work on a comprehensive user fee policy for government.
(Treasury and Policy Board, with departments)

The Auditor General, in his 2000 report, recommended that clear fiscal and legislative information be collected and reported on user fees, including the rationale for rates charged.

Progress was limited in 2002–2003, due to a lack of a full-time staff person to do the work. A decision was made to hire a person to advance the work in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Continue work on a program inventory and costing initiative.
(Treasury and Policy Board, with departments)

The Program Inventory and Costing Initiative (PICI) is a two-year initiative consisting of two phases: a program inventory framework, with a scheduled completion date of December 2003, and a costing methodology, with a scheduled completion date of October 2004.

In the 2002–2003, a project steering committee was formed, a corporate project manager was hired, and a project charter and project plan were developed. The steering committee consists of members from the Senior Financial

Executive Forum, Policy Advisory Committee, and Treasury and Policy Board Pilot departments and departmental project managers were assigned and started working on components of the project.

PRIORITY

Continue to implement recommendations of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force, which will complete its final report this year.
(Treasury and Policy Board)

The Red Tape Reduction Task Force task force recommended that formal processes and tools be put in place so that regulatory review and red tape reduction would continue in years to come. The committee recognized that departments should be responsible for creating better and more efficient regulations and administrative processes.

Departments continued work in 2002–2003 to clean up out-of-date legislation and regulations, as recommended by the Red Tape Reduction Task Force. The complexity of many of these regulations means that the review process will continue for the next several years. This review process involved 34 acts, 5 new pieces of legislation, 112 regulations, and 5 new regulations.

Departments were directed to identify regulations that were considered prospects for elimination or otherwise needed to be harmonized with other jurisdictions, simplified, or updated.

Treasury and Policy Board introduced a requirement for departments with significant regulatory responsibilities to submit red tape reduction plans as part of their annual business plans. Several departments, including Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment and Labour, Natural Resources, and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs, responded to red tape reduction in their 2001–2002 accountability reports and in their 2002–2003 business plans.

Departments also made use of the Regulation Criteria Check List, developed by the task force, to ensure that proposed regulations are necessary and likely to be effective. The check list prompts consideration of other policy instruments available and analysis of the validity of the proposed measure and of the potential cost of the regulation to business or government.

The final report of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force was not completed in 2002–2003, but will be released in 2003–2004.

PRIORITY

Continue to improve the business planning process, including refinement of outcome measures and performance reporting.
(Treasury and Policy Board)

Treasury and Policy Board continued to refine the business planning and accountability reporting processes in 2002–2003. Revised guidelines were prepared for both processes, incorporating feedback from departments. The goal is to make business plans more strategic, with better-focused priorities.

Treasury and Policy Board made progress on a new approach to the measurement of government goals and objectives, which emphasizes accountability for those outcomes that can be influenced or controlled. The approach builds upon the work that began as "outcome measures" and promotes organization-specific accountability for results.

In accountability reports published in December 2002, outcomes were divided into immediate, intermediate, and ultimate (or societal) outcomes. Government entities manage for ultimate outcomes, but are held accountable for performance measures linked to immediate and intermediate outcomes.

Workshops and presentations, as well as one-on-one meetings, were held throughout the year to assist staff in identifying outcomes and developing or refining performance measures.

Guidelines were developed for including performance measures in the annual business plan and for reporting on actual results in the annual accountability plan. Documentation and training will be further refined in 2003–2004.

Measuring Our Performance

BALANCED OR SURPLUS BUDGET

Outcome: Open and accountable government

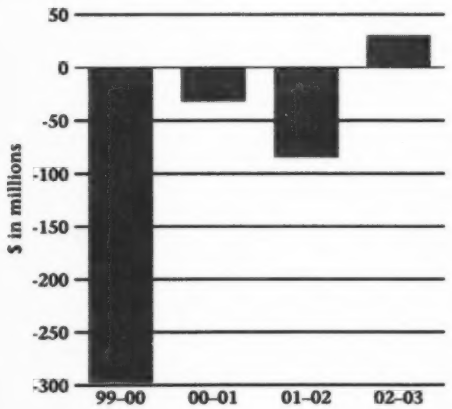
What does the measure tell us?

A key priority of government is to put and keep Nova Scotia's finances in order. A measure of the government's commitment to this priority is the achievement of meeting fiscal targets to reduce the deficit in 2001–2002 and deliver a balanced budget in fiscal 2002–2003. Continually reducing deficits and achieving a balanced budget means that the government is living within its means.

Where are we now?

Nova Scotia produced a surplus of $31.6 million in 2002–2003 (the surplus was estimated at $1.3 million in last year's Accountability Report). The surplus was based on an unqualified audit report and in full compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Nova Scotia is a leader in the country in GAAP compliance.

Provincial Surplus (Deficit) 1999–2003



(Deficit) surplus before provision for Unusual Items: Sysco (1999–2000); Gain on sale of NSRL (2000–01).

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance.

Where do we want to be?

The government has realized a surplus for 2002–2003 and is working towards a balanced budget again in 2003–2004.

GOVERNMENT ENTITIES COMPLETING ANNUAL BUSINESS PLANS

Outcome: Open and accountable government

What does the measure tell us?

This measure indicates compliance with and support for the Government of Nova Scotia's commitment to the principle of open and accountable government.

Business plans promote public accountability oy providing a benchmark against which results can be assessed. On an annual basis, departments, significant public service entities[1], and Crown corporations set out their priorities for the coming fiscal year, in an annual business plan, within the context of their mission and core business areas and government's priorities. Entity business plans are reviewed by government and published on their websites. Results achieved during the year are detailed in accountability reports prepared following the end of the fiscal year.

Where are we now?

For base year 2001–2002, and for 2002–2003 all government entities—that is, departments, significant public service entities, and Crown corporations, completed annual business plans.

Where do we want to be?

Our intention is to have the same departments, public service entities, and Crown corporations continue preparing annual business plans. We will also continue to improve business plan contents on an annual basis, based on feedback received from readers and preparers.

1 The name "public service votes" was changed to "public service entities" during the 2002–2003 fiscal year.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Outcome: Open and accountable government

Government aims to deliver programs and services in ways that are cost-effective and also improve the quality of services. In order to meet government's strategic goal of providing responsible, accountable governance, it is very important to measure customer satisfaction. Monitoring customers' expectations and experiences with the delivery of government services provides valuable information as to where best to focus attention to continually improve the delivery of services.

What does the measure tell us?

The overall customer satisfaction percentage is a measure that was selected from customer satisfaction surveys performed during the last two fiscal years.

Customer satisfaction is a key variable indicating whether government is achieving its desire to be open and accountable to customer concerns and expectations and to provide responsible, accountable governance.

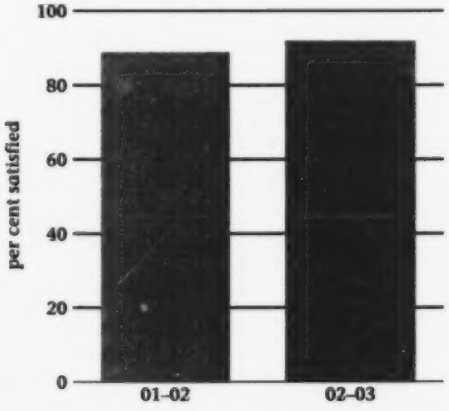
Where are we now?

Government was able to achieve a level of overall customer satisfaction of 92 per cent, with services offered through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, improving upon results from the 2001–2002 fiscal year and exceeding the overall target. This figure includes customers who indicated they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the services they received.

Where do we want to be?

The government wishes to continue to satisfy its customers and maintain an overall satisfaction rate of 90 per cent.

Customer Satisfaction



Source: Surveys conducted in Access Nova Scotia Centres, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Appendix: Measuring Our Performance

Nova Scotia's Government Business Plan outlines corporate measures each year to track the performance of government programs and services. The Annual Accountability Report provides the opportunity to assess whether the intended outcomes are being achieved. Reporting accurate, relevant, and consistent information is essential to effective decision making and policy development and fundamental to government's accountability to its citizens.

Finding appropriate, meaningful performance measures is a challenge for all governments and, indeed, all organizations. The government of Nova Scotia continues to improve this measurement process. In 2002–2003, we continued to make considerable progress in our performance measurement process.

OUTCOME MEASURES VS. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We focus on outcomes, but we are measuring government's performance on those programs and services that contribute to the achievement of desired outcomes for the province. In addition we have implemented the principles and practices of performance measurement. As a result, we use the term "performance" measures rather than "outcome" measures.

CONSISTENCY WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEASURES

We have aligned the measures chosen, where possible, with those used by national and international organizations. This allows more meaningful comparability. It should be noted that further changes may be necessary as the national and international measures evolve.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES HAVE A CONTEXT

Measures are not expressed as numbers alone. Each measure is given a full context to explain what the statistics mean, why they are important, and how they relate to government's priorities. This prevents misinterpretation of statistical data.

MEASURES LINKED TO CORE BUSINESS AREAS

We tie measures to core businesses—those key government programs and services that do not change significantly each year. Measures are categorized under the six core business areas of government: health and health care, education and learning, the economy, families and communities, the environment, and government services. The measures should not change significantly from year to year, even if

there are changes to priorities within the core businesses.

SOME SOCIETAL OUTCOMES INCLUDED

We identified three levels of outcomes: immediate, intermediate, and long-term (societal) outcomes. The government business plan and accountability report focus on the immediate and intermediate outcomes—the ones we can influence more and for which there is a reasonable link between the actions and intended outcomes of a program/service. Societal outcomes—like those associated with literacy, life expectancy, health status, prosperity, and innovation—are achieved through the actions of many contributors, including government.

We need to be aware of changes and trends that will help to shape the policies, programs, and services of the future. For this reason, we continue to include some of these societal measures—such as employment, crime rates, and road safety—in our list, but focus on the areas where government is able to make a difference.

ACCOUNTING FOR CHANGES

Three performance measures have been dropped and will not be reported in the 2002–2003 *Accountability Report*. These are

- **Personal Safety**
  This refers to public perceptions that are based on any number of factors that have led to the formulation of that perception. As a societal level outcome, government's influence cannot be accurately or efficiently measured.
- **Actual Government Expenditures**
  The measure can be misleading, given the different ways in which it may be interpreted. There are numerous factors involved in the result, and any one factor—or combination of factors—may significantly alter the result. For example, if revenues increase, government may choose to increase expenditures in areas that truly required the additional funds.
  At other times, there is less control over an expenditure— like wage settlements that are higher than anticipated.
- **Government Services Transactions Performed Electronically**
  There were technical challenges with the data capture of this measure. We will continue to work to replace the measure in future years.

NOVA SCOTIA